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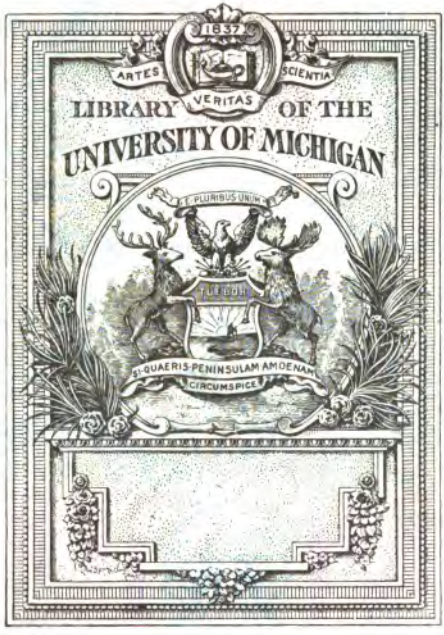
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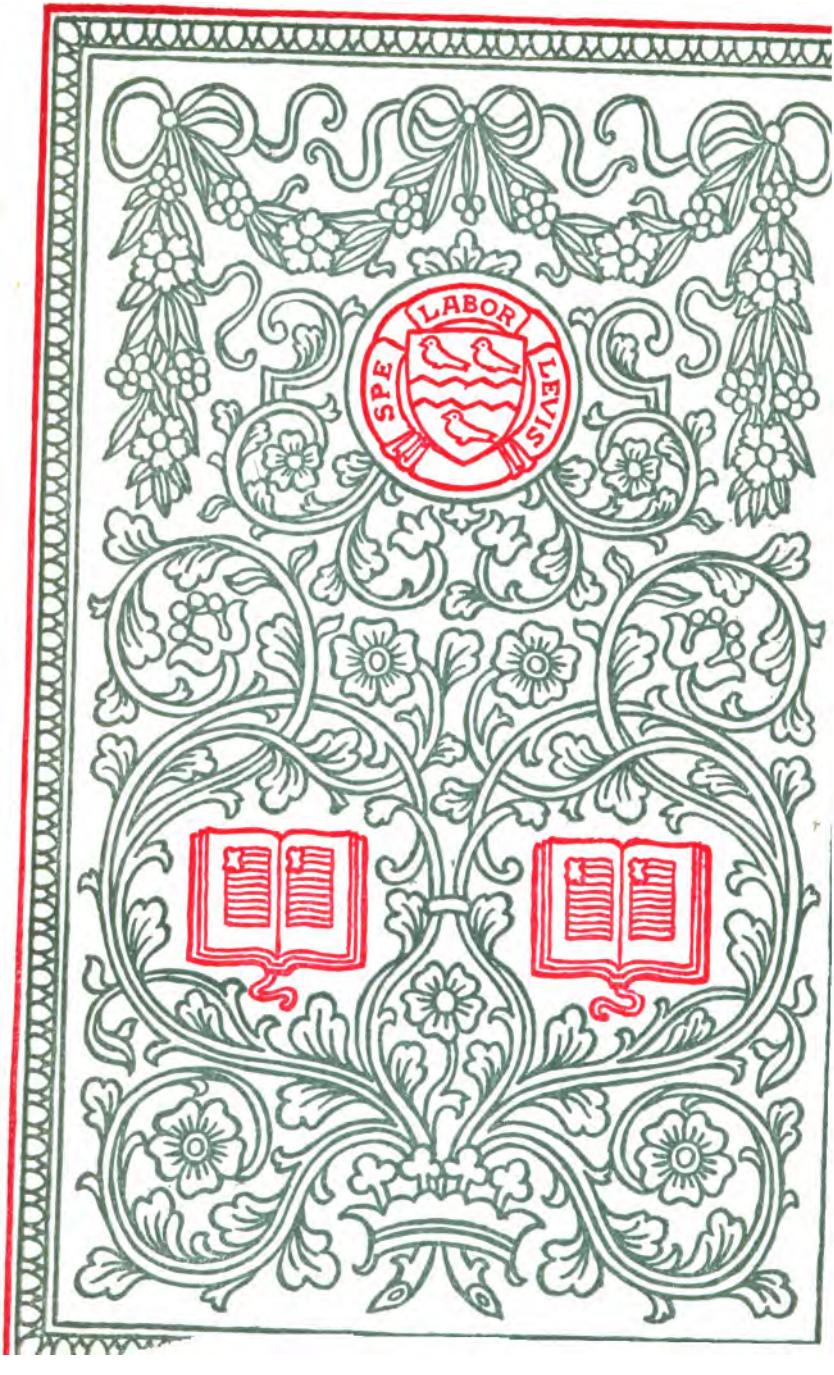
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THE LIFE AND ART OF EDWIN BOOTH

AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

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EDWIN BOOTH
As Hamlet.





The Life and Art of Edwin Booth

and His Contemporaries

By

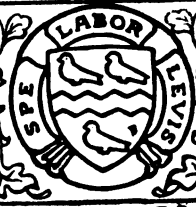
Brander Matthews

and

Laurence Hutton



Illustrated



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MISS MARY ANDERSON.

Beautiful lady from a far-off land,
In whose fair form rejoicingly we trace
The loveliest features of a kindred race
That bids thee welcome with an outstretched hand,
Which lingers lovingly in clasped embrace,
Until our deep emotions, in flushed face,
Thou mayest read, and reading understand
Our passionate love of purity and grace;
Springing spontaneous from thy generous heart!
We pray Heaven guard thee in thy noble art,
Where art is lost;— made so to intertwine
With purest nature, as to form a part
Of thine own being — as entirely thine
That but one word expresseth it — it is DIVINE!

FRANCIS BENNOCH.

MISS MARY ANDERSON.

Since the death of Charlotte Cushman, the American stage has waited for an actress whose aspiration and endeavor might foreshadow an imperial rule. Women have appeared during the last ten years who have distinguished themselves in certain parts and won renown in the portrayal and expression of certain emotions; but therein were equally revealed their powers and their limitations. The manifold attributes of mind and character, developed by serious purpose into a noble harmony, have not been clearly exhibited on our stage by any actress of recent years. To say this does not lessen the fame of any artist now before the public; the assertion plucks no laurel from any deserving brow. I have said that actresses have become famous through certain impersonations, and I am well aware that not without thought and study were the portraits conceived and executed. But I do not regard the emotional expert as entitled to come under the head of *Richelieu's* phrase of "entirely great." Because a certain actress, for instance, has been exceptionally effective as *Camille*, it does not follow, I think, that equal identification would attend a new assumption. Would not a change of part rather be something of the nature of a fresh experiment?—not the assured donning of a becoming mantle. As a rule, it is the opportunity for effective realism that appeals

to the dramatic specialist, and just so far as the realistic possibilities of any given part accord with the ambition, temperament, and unique personality of the player, so far will be the measure of the success. It is noticeable that the performances of the specialist afford few, if any, felicitous contrasts. The acting is likely to be on the same plane of thought, feeling, and expression, and it compels interest and admiration by a sustained physical and emotional strain. I may be asked if the oculist and surgeon are not important adjuncts to the medical profession? I answer, they are, of course; but then we never expect to be blind nor to have a limb taken off, however frequently we know we may need the *doctor*.

The achievements of the actress whose name heads this paper demand a consideration far beyond my present limits; but I think no consideration is needed to say that she has kindled a greater hope and gives a brighter promise than any American actress since the death of Charlotte Cushman. Perhaps she it is for whom the stage has been waiting. Something in her early aspiration; in the manner of her first appearance; in the steps by which she has advanced; in her patient yet energetic acquirement of the details of her art; in her devotion to high ideals; in her refined taste and nobleness of spirit; in her painstaking zeal; in her endowment of intelligence and beauty; in her self-respecting nature;—something in all these seems to point to a bright fulfilment of the present hope and promise.

Miss Mary Anderson was born on July 28, 1859. Her birthplace was Sacramento, California, but she was still an infant when her parents moved to Ken-

tucky. The record of her early years is full of interest for those who study the careers of women of genius; and it may be noted that she was wayward and restless under school and domestic restraint. Her nature was truthful, her disposition such as to make her a favorite wherever known, and she seems to have been the idol of her playmates. It is confessed that her school-learning was of small account, and her conduct under tuition often refractory. It was on leaving school, at the age of thirteen, that she began to study; but her book was Shakspere, and the poet opened the gates of dream-land to her, as he has to so many others, before and since. We are told that the poet was an education to her, and that her intellectual development was rapid. The male characters of Shakspere interested her most at this time; she studied with ardor the parts of *Hamlet*, *Romeo*, and *Richard III.*; and while thus engaged she also employed herself in cultivating her voice. Her passion for the stage seems to have been inborn, and her first visit to the theatre was an event which held the seal of destiny. In her fourteenth year she saw Edwin Booth in *Richard III.*, and the performance, as may well be imagined, was a revelation to her. Later she visited Miss Cushman, and received from that great actress an encouraging opinion of her powers, accompanied with the advice to place herself in study and training for another year before making an appearance in public. This advice was followed. For dramatic instructor the late Mr. Vandenhoff was selected, and he gave her ten lessons, which is said to have been her only professional training. Her first appearance was made at Macauley's Theatre, Louis-

ville, on Nov. 27, 1875, in the character of *Juliet*, the play-bill reading "by a Louisville Young Lady." It is on record that competent judges regarded this first performance as indicating great natural talent. From that time to the present Miss Anderson has steadily pursued her professional path, not without a share of the vicissitudes and disappointments that beset a theatrical career, and her progress has been watched with more than ordinary interest by the American theatre-going public.

Her first regular engagement was at the Louisville Theatre, in the January following her debut, and in the course of it she played *Evadne*, *Bianca*, *Julia*, and *Juliet*. This engagement was succeeded by her appearance in St. Louis, New Orleans, Washington, and San Francisco. A New York audience welcomed her for the first time on Nov. 12, 1877, when she appeared at the Fifth Avenue Theatre as *Pauline*, in the 'Lady of Lyons.' She successively played *Juliet*, *Evadne*, *Meg Merrilies* and *Parthenia*. She made a first visit to Europe in 1878 (not a professional one), returning the same year, and playing again at the Fifth Avenue Theatre in a round of her chosen parts.

It is not needful to chronicle here the professional engagements of Miss Anderson from year to year. Let it suffice that she has played in all the principal cities of the Union, and in 1883 made a second visit to Europe, this time professionally, where she remained until the autumn of 1885, adding largely to her dramatic laurels by her performances in the United Kingdom, and winning great popular esteem by her personal worth. In August of 1885 she played

Rosalind (her first appearance in that character) at Stratford-on-Avon, for the benefit of the Shakspere Memorial Theatre, and the proceeds of this performance may be seen in the beautiful sculptured emblems of Comedy and Tragedy which now adorn the front of the Memorial Hall where 'As You Like It' was acted. On Miss Anderson's return to her native land she began the season of 1885–6 with *Rosalind*, at the Star Theatre in New York. This season, which embraced an extended tour of the United States, ended in May, 1886, and in June following the actress sailed again for England.

Eleven years have passed since Miss Anderson's first appearance. Her progress has shown a steady increase of dramatic comprehension and power, and her professional life has been marked by thoughtful study and conscientious work. She has added to her repertory from time to time, and her list of characters presents an array which tested many of her great predecessors. Free and beautiful, she stands before us as the foremost American actress, and her career from first to last, viewed in whatever light, is one of which we have every reason to be proud. It is worthy of all regard that from pure and sincere professional devotion Miss Anderson has never swerved.

But the time has not yet come when the lists may be closed and the crown awarded. Something is due to tradition—to famous actresses of the past who found the path to fame no royal road. An acute critic, writing in 1880 on the recognition of the increasing merit of Miss Anderson's performances, after a summary of what he judged were her merits

and defects, used these words: "Here, in brief, is more tragic impulse than human tenderness; more of physical strength and force of will than of spiritual intensity; more of the ravishing opulence of youthful womanhood than of the thrilling frenzy of genius or the dominant grandeur of intellectual character. Yet, what a wealth of natural power is here! what glorious promise! what splendid possibilities!" Doubtless many of the lines of limitation here suggested have been obliterated by growth and development; but Miss Anderson does not claim to be a prodigy and will be willing to wait for those teachings of experience that have their part in rounding and perfecting all human effort. Not to have suffered is a lesson of life missed. The "glorious promise," the "splendid possibilities," remain, and there our hope shall rest.

It may be of interest to place on record Miss Anderson's present repertory: *Juliet*, in 'Romeo and Juliet'; *Evadne*, in 'Evadne'; *Bianca*, in 'Fazio'; *Julia*, in the 'Hunchback'; *Parthenia*, in 'Ingomar'; *Pauline*, in the 'Lady of Lyons'; *Meg Merrilies*, in 'Guy Mannering'; *Lady Macbeth*, in 'Macbeth' (sleep scene); the *Countess*, in 'Love'; *Duchess de Torrenucra*, in 'Faint Heart Never Won Fair Lady'; *Ion*, in 'Ion'; *Galatea*, in 'Pygmalion and Galatea'; *Berthe*, in 'Roland's Daughter'; *Desdemona*, in 'Othello'; *Clarice*, in 'Comedy and Tragedy'; *Rosalind*, in 'As You Like It.'

WILLIAM L. KEESE.

We can scarcely bring ourselves to speak of the young actress who came before the footlights last night, with the coolness of a critic and a spectator. Our interest in native genius and young endeavor, in courage and brave effort that arrives from so near us—our own city—precludes the possibility of standing outside of sympathy, and peering in with analyzing and judicial glance. But we do not think that any man of judgment who witnessed Miss Anderson's acting of *Juliet*, can doubt that she is a great actress. In the latter scenes she interpreted the very spirit and soul of tragedy, and thrilled the whole house into silence by the depth of her passion and her power. She is essentially a tragic genius, and began really to act only after the scene in which her nurse tells *Juliet* of what she supposes is her lover's death. The quick gasp, the terrified, stricken face, the tottering step, the passionate and heart-rending accents were nature's own marks of affecting overwhelming grief.

Miss Anderson has great power over the lower tones of her rich voice. Her whisper electrifies and penetrates; her hurried words in the passion of the scene where she drinks the sleeping potion, and afterwards in the catastrophe at the end, although very far below conversational pitch, came to the ear with distinctness and with wonderful effect. In the final scene she reached the climax of her acting, which, from the time of *Tybalt's* death to the end, was full of tragic power that we have never seen equalled. It will be observed that we have placed the merit of this actress (in our opinion) for the most part in her deeper and more sombre powers, and despite the high praise that we more gladly offer as her due, we can-

not be blind to her faults in the presentation of last evening. She is, undoubtedly, a great actress, and last night evidenced a magnificent genius, more especially remarkable on account of her extreme youth; but whether she is a great *Juliet* is, indeed, more doubtful. We can imagine her as personating *Lady Macbeth* superbly, and hope soon to witness her in the part. As *Juliet*, her conception is almost perfect, as evinced by her rare and exceptional taste and intuitive understanding of the text. But her enactment of the earlier scenes lacks the exuberance and earnest joyfulness of the pure and glowing Flower of Italy, with all her fanciful conceits and delightful and loving ardor.

The Louisville Courier, Nov. 28, 1875.

Not long afterwards Mary Anderson's dramatic powers were submitted to the critical judgment of Miss Cushman. The great actress, then in the zenith of her fame, was residing not far distant, at Cincinnati. Accompanied by her mother, Mary presented herself at Miss Cushman's hotel. They happened to meet in the vestibule. The veteran actress took the young aspirant's hand with her accustomed vigorous grasp, to which Mary, not to be outdone, nerved herself to respond in kind; and patting her at the same time affectionately on the cheek, invited her to read before her on an early morning. When Miss Cushman had entered her waiting carriage, Mary Anderson, with her wonted veneration for what pertained to the stage, begged that she might be allowed to be the first to sit in the chair that had been occupied for a few moments by the great actress. Miss Cushman's verdict was

highly favorable. "You have," she said, "three essential requisites for the stage: voice, personality, and gesture. With a year's longer study and some training, you may venture to make an appearance before the public." Miss Cushman recommended that she should take lessons from the younger Vandenhoff, who was at the time a successful character teacher in New York. A year from that date occurred the actress's lamented death, almost on the very day of Mary Anderson's *début*.

J. M. FARRAR: 'Mary Anderson: the Story of her Life,' *chap.* 2, *pp.* 13–14.

Her works are growing in symmetry—but neither in unity nor in splendor. She still [March, 1880] wins as a beauty, impresses as a prodigy, and startles as a genius. The word has not yet been spoken which is to give her soul its entire freedom, arm it with all its powers, and make the forms of art the slaves of her will. The triumph of Miss Anderson now is the triumph of an exceptional personality shrined in a beautiful person, but not yet the triumph of a consummate actress.

With a superb voice, here is a defective elocution; with a magnificent figure, here is a self-conscious manner in the attitudes; with a noble freedom and suppleness of physical machinery, here is a capricious gesticulation; with a full and fine sense of opportunity for strong and shining points, here is but an incipient perception of the relative value of surrounding characters and the coördination of adjuncts; with a brilliant faculty for stormy and vehement declamation, here, as yet, is an imperfect idea of the

loveliness of quiet touches, verbal shading, and suggestive strokes; with a vigorous, and often grand, manner of address, here is a frequent lack of concentration in listening; with wonderful intuitions as to the wilder moods of human passion, here is a restricted sympathy with the more elemental feelings—from which naturally ensues a certain vagueness in the effect of their manifestation. Here, in brief, is more tragic impulse than human tenderness; more of physical strength and force of will than of spiritual intensity; more of the ravishing opulence of youthful womanhood than of the thrilling frenzy of genius or the dominant grandeur of intellectual character. Yet, what a wealth of natural power is here! What glorious promise! What splendid possibilities!

WILLIAM WINTER: The 'Stage Life of Mary Anderson,' *chap.* I, *pp.* 30–2.

Now, as to the acting. You will at once ask me how is it possible for any one to adequately represent the part of an intensely virtuous, highly respectable and honorable couple, of whom one, the wife, plays the part of the decoy, and the other, the husband, the *rôle* of a bully? A virtuous and respectable *Becky Sharp* is a contradiction in terms; but Miss Mary Anderson having chosen the part for herself, plays it, and assumes the responsibility of the interpretation.

She looks it to perfection, and from a certain point of view, which must be her own, or she would not have selected the piece, plays it admirably. I can imagine what Sarah Bernhardt would have done with it, but she could never have enlisted the sym-

pathies of the audience as an honest wife; but the actress who can enlist the sympathies of the audience by acting as a Lucretia could but imperfectly portray the seductive caresses of a Phryne. Miss Anderson sacrifices the Phryne to the Lucretia, and her consistently impossible character is entirely in keeping with the utterly artificial and purely theatrical situation. The recitation with which *Clarice* attempts to entertain her sprawling guests (it must have been the dullest party conceivable) has been ingeniously devised and cleverly written. It is at once the *tour de force* of both author and actress.

Punch, London, Feb. 9, 1884.

In 'Ingomar,' Miss Anderson was instinct with force and with simplicity. She had just the delicate yet firm touch which the character in its main lines demands; and it is a character made up for the most part of broad outlines. Yet here and there comes a passage where fine shading is wanted; and such a passage is the rejection of the tricky *Polydor's* suit. Then Miss Anderson was absolutely, hopelessly as it seemed, at fault. She had to reject the disgusting old man with a laugh, and the impression produced was that the actress had learned a laugh,—not *the* laugh necessary for the circumstances and situation, but simply a laugh,—and that she reproduced this echo of an abstract laugh with an accuracy which made its sound all the more incongruous and insincere. Also, —but this is a fault of a different kind,—the diction was frequently very indistinct. Yet, with all faults admitted, the acting was full both of promise and of performance, and of broad conviction that Miss Ander-

son had won the admiration of American audiences by something more than beauty and grace alone.

So, again, in the 'Lady of Lyons,' an eminently artificial piece, with an eminently artificial heroine's part, Miss Anderson was graceful, statuesque, intelligent, or more than intelligent and charming. But there was, so far, nothing to show whether she had a claim to be considered as an actress in the true sense of the word. If her power of impersonation seemed faulty, or even altogether wanting, why, that might be the fault of the plays rather than of the player.

Then Miss Anderson appeared as the vivified statue in Mr. Gilbert's 'Pygmalion and Galatea,'—one of the very vulgarest and commonest plays ever written by an author of cleverness; and in this she set herself a hard task. The result of the experiment is the spectacle of a lady, gifted with singular grace and earnestness, delivering lines which are anything rather than graceful with a manner so opposed to the whole notion of the piece that the effect is indescribably odd. It is as if a pretty and harmless tenor were suddenly to attempt some swaggering baritone, without a perception of the swaggering element. This is, however, a merely general impression. Going into particulars, I find that wherever Mr. Gilbert has been unable or uncareful to coarsen the beautiful legend, and wherever trusting to a fine and simple perception of the legend's poetry is enough for the acting's needs, there Miss Anderson is charming, and singularly charming. Such a moment is the first awakening of the statue, which could hardly be bettered in voice, manner, or look. But when the complex emotions come into play, then, even when one makes fullest allowance for the



MARY ANDERSON
As Galatea in " Pygmalion and Galatea."

Mail

common and stupid inconsistencies attributed by Mr. Gilbert to the statue, and for an actress's difficulty in glossing over their stupidity, I think Miss Anderson fails for want of perception, and for want of "instruction" in the French, rather than the English, sense of the word. Here she underplays and there she overplays her difficult part. . . . The very first scene and the very last are, to my thinking, out of eight, the best, so far as Miss Anderson is concerned. But the fact remains that when all its faults are counted up, the performance has charm and, I think, talent which might become very remarkable if its possessor were not in great danger of being spoilt by unthinking applause.

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK, in the *Century Magazine*, June, 1884.

Miss Anderson's *Rosalind* deserves much praise. She looked and did her best. In appearance she nearly realized Lodge's glowing description of his Rosalynde: "All in general applauded the admirable riches that Nature bestowed on her face." When she was disguised in buff jerkin and hose as *Ganymede*, it was impossible to do other than commend *Phœbe's* fickleness. Miss Anderson's faults are well-known, and many of them were still present. Her pathos in the early scenes sounded artificial. The proud scorn with which she replied to *Duke Frederick's* accusation of treason was the only speech in the first act which she delivered with any approach to real feeling. In the forest scenes she appeared to far better advantage. In her interviews with *Orlando* she proved herself in sympathy with the spirit of the comedy: full

of youthful vivacity, she kept well within the limits of womanly reserve. She bantered *Phœbe* with the cruelest ease, but her manner as the mocking censor of the rustic coquette was quite free from the touches of anxiety which she sought—often successfully—to impart to her raillery of her lover. Miss Anderson delivered the epilogue with great naturalness and spirit, and dismissed her audience in the best of humors.

SIDNEY L. LEE, in the *Academy*, London, Sept. 5, 1885.

It is not three years since Miss Mary Anderson first came among us, a young American girl, heralded only by undeniable evidence (the sun being witness) of her striking beauty, and conflicting rumors as to her talent. She is now returning to her native land an artistic and social notability of the first magnitude. Her success is all the more remarkable—certainly all the more creditable—in that it has been gained entirely by her own unaided efforts in the art she professes. She had no social notoriety to launch her on her career, nor did she take any pains to acquire it. She shunned rather than courted personal publicity. She did not ride on fire-engines or sleep in coffins. Scandal, even in this malevolent world, held aloof from her, and if silly gossip now and then gave her "the puff oblique," it was without her connivance and to her no small discomfort. It may even be said that she was deliberately and injudiciously contemptuous of all personal means of propitiation. To some people, unable to dissociate the two ideas of "dramatic artist" and "eccentric bohemian," her attitude ap-

peared unwarrantably repellent, and she suffered in more ways than one from a certain unapproachableness which was construed as the feminine form of that foible which in the stronger sex we call priggishness. Even criticism was not unaffected by this feeling, and she was treated, I do not say with injustice, but certainly with scant cordiality. She has won the public with little help from the press, and that, in these days, is of itself a remarkable achievement. . . . .

Let us pass, then, to Miss Anderson's latest and most interesting effort—her *Rosalind.* The critics who criticise before the event were full of doubts as to her capacity for comedy. *Juliet's* scene with the *Nurse* should have banished any such doubt. It proved Miss Anderson's possession of a fund of delicate playfulness which could not but stand her in good stead in the part of the sprightly *Ganymede.* This quality was, indeed, apparent throughout; but, as Lady Martin remarks, it is a "strange perversion" to suppose that *Rosalind* can be adequately performed by actresses "whose strength lies only in comedy." There is in her a "deep womanly tenderness," and an "intellect disciplined by fine culture," which must be made apparent through all her sportive vivacity. In the "deep womanly tenderness" Miss Anderson was, perhaps, a little lacking. Her *Rosalind* was girlish rather than womanly, but it was so brightly, frankly, healthily girlish that to have quarrelled with it would have been sheer captiousness. In the opening scenes (it must be remembered that I speak of her first performance of the part, a most trying occasion) she had not altogether warmed to her work, though even here she was intelligent and charming. Her speech to the

Duke, culminating in the line, "What's that to me? My father was no traitor!" showed traces of her early and unpolished manner. It lacked nobility and loftiness. Its indignation was too loud. It was invective rather than self-restrained and scathing sarcasm. Not till she appeared in the first forest scene was Miss Anderson's success assured, but then a very few speeches placed it beyond question. Her appearance was ideal. No actress whom I have seen in *Rosalind*, or indeed in any "doublet and hose" part, wears these trying garments with anything like the ease, grace and perfect good taste displayed by Miss Anderson. In most *Rosalinds* the woman obtrudes herself upon the physical as well as the mental eye. We cannot get rid of the feeling that *Orlando* must inevitably see through this masquerade from the very first. In Miss Anderson's case we meet with no such stumbling-block. A cleverly-designed costume, modest without prudery, combined with her lithe, well-knit and in no way redundant figure to make her a perfect embodiment of the "saucy lackey." Her beauty, which is essentially feminine, was the only circumstance which need have made *Orlando* suspect the woman in her, if (to oblige Shakspere) we suppose it possible that he should fail to recognize her as the identical *Rosalind* of the wrestling-match. Her claret-colored mantle, exquisitely handled, gave her the means for much significant by-play through which she prevented the audience from forgetting her sex, without in any way suggesting it to *Orlando*. Its tastefulness was perhaps the great charm of her *Rosalind*.

WILLIAM ARCHER, in the *Theatre*, October, 1885.

MR. AND MRS. BANCROFT.

(Miss Marie Wilton.)

Dramatic flowers they gathered by the way,
And chose the brightest wheresoe'er it grows;
Never disdaining to contrast in play,
French tiger-lily with the English rose.

With kindly Robertson they formed a 'School,'
Rejoiced in 'Play' after long anxious hours;
'Caste' was for them, and theirs, a golden rule,
And thus by principle we made them 'Ours.'

CLEMENT SCOTT.

MR. AND MRS. BANCROFT.

Marie Effie Wilton, known since her marriage as Mrs. Bancroft, was born at Doncaster about 1840. Her father and mother were both on the stage, and when little more than an infant she used to recite in public. After playing children's parts on the Norwich circuit, she was engaged with her parents, at the Theatre Royal, Manchester, then managed by H. J. Wallack, where she appeared, Oct. 5, 1846, as *Fleance* in 'Macbeth.' She remained for some years in Manchester, playing, among other parts, *Goneril's* page in 'King Lear,' *Mamilius* in the 'Winter's Tale,' the *Emperor of Lilliput* in a pantomime of 'Gulliver,' *Hymen* in 'As You Like It,' and *Arthur* in 'King John,'—a part in which Charles Kemble saw and admired her. From Manchester, she passed, while yet a child, to the Bristol and Bath circuit, and did not make her first appearance in London until Sept. 15, 1856, when she played the boy *Henri* to Mr. Charles Dillon's *Belphegor*, at the Lyceum, and on the same evening created the title-part in W. Brough's burlesque 'Perdita; or the Royal Milkmaid.'* Her success was immediate, and she was soon in great request.

* Mr. J. L. Toole played *Hilarion Fanfaronade* in the drama and *Autolycus* in the burlesque.

At the Lyceum she played the *Little Fairy at the Bottom of the Sea* in W. Brough's 'Conrad and Medora' (Dec. 26, 1856); at the Haymarket *Cupid* in Talfourd's 'Atalanta' (April 13,1857); and at the Adelphi *Cupid* in the pantomime of 'Cupid and Psyche' (Dec. 26, 1857). She remained a member of the Adelphi Company under Webster's management until the demolition of the theatre (last performance, June 2, 1858), and afterwards played with Webster and Madame Céleste at the Surrey and Sadler's Wells. On July 26, 1858, she made her first appearance at the Strand Theatre as *Carlo Broschi* in 'Asmodeus; or The Little Devil.' The Strand was now her head-quarters for six years (until December, 1864). She formed one of the chief attractions of the series of burlesques, then so unflaggingly popular. Her *Pippo* in H. J. Byron's 'Maid and the Magpie' (Oct. 11, 1858), finally established her reputation. On Dec. 17, 1858, Charles Dickens wrote to Forster:—"I . . . went to the Strand Theatre, having taken a stall beforehand, for it is always crammed. I really wish you would go between this and next Thursday, to see the 'Maid and the Magpie' burlesque there. There is the strangest thing in it that ever I have seen on the stage,—the boy, *Pippo*, by Miss Wilton. While it is astonishingly impudent (must be, or it couldn't be done at all), it is so stupendously like a boy, and unlike a woman, that it is perfectly free from offence. I never have seen such a thing. Priscilla Horton, as a boy, not to be thought of beside it. . . . I call her the cleverest girl I have ever seen on the stage in my time, and the most singularly original." After *Pippo*, her principal parts at the Strand were *Sir Walter Ra-*

leigh in Halliday's 'Kenilworth' (1858), *Juliet** in Halliday's 'Romeo and Juliet' (1859), *Albert* in Talfourd's 'Tell' (1859), *Karl* in Byron and Talfourd's 'Miller and his Men' (1860), *Aladdin* in Byron's 'Aladdin' (1861), *Pierre Gringoire* in Byron's 'Esmeralda' (1861), *Miles-na-Coppaleen* in Byron's 'Miss Eily O'Connor' (1862), *Orpheus* in Byron's 'Orpheus and Eurydice' (1863), and *Mazourka* in Byron's Mazourka' (1864). During a short break in her connection with the Strand Theatre she appeared at the St. James's (Easter Monday, 1863) as *Geordie Robertson* in the 'Great Sensation Trial; or Circumstantial Effie Deans,' by W. Brough; and at the St. James's and the Adelphi, as well as at the Strand, she occasionally played in comediettas, such as the 'Little Treasure,' 'A Grey Mare,' the 'Little Sentinel,' and 'Good for Nothing.'

In the winter of 1864–5 Miss Wilton conceived the idea of entering into partnership with Mr. H. J. Byron in the management of a theatre; and while this project was maturing it so happened that she paid a starring visit to the Prince of Wales's Theatre, Liverpool, where her future husband was then appearing. Mr. Squire Bancroft Bancroft was born in London May 14, 1841, and joined the dramatic profession at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, in January, 1861. He served his apprenticeship in Birmingham, Dublin and Liverpool, supporting such stars as G. V. Brooke, Phelps, Charles Kean, Charles James Mathews and

* On April 18, 1864, Miss Wilton played *Juliet* in Shakspere's Balcony Scene, to the *Romeo* of Miss Ada Swanborough, for the benefit of the Shakspere Tercentenary Fund; a performance which was so well received that it was repeated for eight nights.

Sothern, and playing in such diverse parts as *Mercutio*, the *Ghost* in 'Hamlet,' *Laertes*, *Gratiano*, *Bob Brierly*, *John Mildmay*, *Captain Hawkesley* and *Monsieur Tourbillon*. His ability so impressed Mr. Byron and Miss Wilton that they offered him an engagement, and he made his first appearance in London on the first night of their management.

The theatre in Tottenham Street, Tottenham Court Road, which was ultimately to become famous as the birthplace of cup-and-saucer comedy, had existed as a playhouse since 1810, under the successive names of the Theatre of Variety, the Regency Theatre, the West London Theatre, the Fitzroy Theatre and the Queen's Theatre. After ruining several lessees, it was taken in 1839 by Mr. C. J. James, a scenic artist, who succeeded in keeping it going for more than twenty-five years with entertainments of the most unambitious order. It was from him that the new lessees rented it, and he still figured for a time on the bills as "actual and responsible manager."

On Saturday, April 15, 1865, the reconstructed Queen's Theatre, renamed the Prince of Wales's, was opened under the management of Miss Marie Wilton. The bill consisted of J. P. Wooler's comedy 'A Winning Hazard' (Mr. Bancroft playing *Jack Crowley*); Byron's burlesque of 'La Sonnambula; or the Supper, the Sleeper and the Merry Swiss Boy,' with Miss Wilton in the part of *Alessio;* and Troughton's farce of 'Vandyke Brown.' The original intention of the management was to rely upon light comedy and burlesque. During the first season Palgrave Simpson's two-act drama, 'A Fair Pretender' and H. J. Byron's 'War to the Knife' were produced, Mr.

Bancroft making his first noteworthy success as *Captain Thistleton* in Byron's comedy. The second season opened (Sept. 25, 1865) with 'Naval Engagements' and Byron's 'Lucia di Lammermoor.' Six weeks later, however, a play was produced which, with its successors, was destined to expel burlesque from the Prince of Wales's stage and to establish a new method in authorship, decoration and acting. During the five years and a half which intervened between the first performance of 'Society' and the death of Mr. T. W. Robertson, that genial playwright was practically the sole caterer of the Prince of Wales's, his comedies steadily increasing in popularity. From this point onwards the history of the Bancroft management may be most shortly and conveniently set forth in the form of annals. That form I consequently adopt, premising that allowance must be made in each year for a summer vacation varying in length from a few days to several weeks and even months.

1865: Nov. 11, Robertson's 'Society'—Mr. Bancroft, *Sydney Daryl*,* Miss Wilton, *Maud Hetherington*—ran over 150 nights; Christmas, Byron's 'Little Don Giovanni,' in which Miss Wilton created her last burlesque part.

1866: May 5, Byron's 'A Hundred Thousand Pounds'; Sept. 15, Robertson's 'Ours'—Mr. Bancroft, *Angus McAlister*, Miss Wilton, *Mary Netley*—followed by 'Pas de Fascination,' in which Miss Lydia Thompson appeared; Oct 10, Byron's 'Der Freyschütz; or the Bell, the Bill and the Ball';

* In the revivals of 'Society' and 'Ours' Mr. Bancroft always played *Tom Stylul* and *Hugh Chalcot*.

Christmas, Byron's 'Pandora's Box," the last burlesque produced, Mr. Byron shortly afterwards resigning his share in the management.

1867 : April 6, Robertson's 'Caste'—Mr. Bancroft, *Captain Hawtree*, Miss Wilton, *Polly Eccles;* Dec. 21, Dion Boucicault's 'How She Loves Him' and 'Box and Cox,' played by Mr. John Hare and Mr. George Honey. On Saturday, Dec. 28, Mr. Bancroft and Miss Marie Wilton were married at the church of St. Stephen the Martyr, Avenue Road, St. John's Wood.

1868 : Feb. 15, Robertson's 'Play'—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, the *Chevalier Browne* and *Rosie Fanquehere* —ran 107 nights; in June and July, a revival of 'Caste'; * in the autumn season, a revival of 'Society'; and Dec. 12, Edward Yates's 'Tame Cats'—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, *Mortimer Wedgewood* and *Mrs. Langley.*

1869 : Jan. 16, Robertson's 'School'—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, *Jack Poyntz* and *Naomi Tighe.* Ran for 381 nights with only one interruption of 11 nights, during which the theatre was entirely re-decorated, the orchestra being placed beneath the stage.

1870 : April 23, Robertson's 'M. P.'—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, *Talbot Piers* and *Cecilia Dunscombe;* it ran for about six months. This was the last in order of the Robertsonian comedies. It was followed by revivals of 'Ours' and 'Caste,' which proved even more attractive than on their first production ; and

* In the case of revivals of pieces previously produced or revived under the Bancroft management, the absence of any statement to the contrary implies that Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft resumed the parts last played by them.

while his work was thus at the height of its popularity Mr. T. W. Robertson died, Feb. 4, 1871. During the next five years Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft were engaged in a strenuous endeavor to keep their stage supplied with English plays, new and old. It was not until 1876 that they yielded to circumstances and produced the first of the adaptations from the French which have so often subjected them to a charge of lack of patriotism. I now resume my tabular statement :—

1872 : May 6, a revival of 'Money'—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, *Sir F. Blount* and *Georgina Vesey*.

1873 : Feb. 22, Wilkie Collins's 'Man and Wife'—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, *Dr. Speedwell* and *Blanche Lundie ;* Sept. 20, a revival of 'School.'

1874 : April 4, a revival of the 'School for Scandal'—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, *Joseph Surface* and *Lady Teazle ;* Nov. 7, W. S. Gilbert's 'Sweethearts'—Mrs. Bancroft, *Jenny Northcott*, Mr. Coghlan, *Harry Spreadbrow ;* and revival of 'Society,' Mrs. Bancroft relinquishing the part of *Maud* to Miss Fanny Josephs.

1875 : April 17, a revival of the 'Merchant of Venice'—Mr. Coghlan, *Shylock*, Miss Ellen Terry, *Portia*, Mr. Bancroft, the *Prince of Morocco*—this production was a disastrous failure ; May 29, a revival of 'Money'—Mrs. Bancroft, *Lady Franklin*, Miss Ellen Terry, *Clara Douglass;* Nov. 6, a revival of 'Masks and Faces'—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, *Triplet* and *Peg Woffington*, Miss Ellen Terry, *Mabel Vane.*

1876 : April 13, Byron's 'Wrinkles'—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, *Bob Blewitt* and *Winifred Piper ;* May 6, a revival of 'Ours' ; Oct. 4, 'Peril,' adapted by

Bolton and Savile Rowe (Clement Scott and B. C. Stephenson) from Sardou's 'Nos Intimes'—Mr. Bancroft, *Sir George Ormond*, Mrs. Kendal, *Lady Ormond*, Mr. Kendal, *Dr. Thornton.*

1877: March 31, the 'Vicarage,' adapted by Clement Scott from Feuillet's 'Village'—Mrs. Bancroft, *Mrs. Haygarth*, Mr. Kendal, *George Clarke*—and 'London Assurance'—Mr. Bancroft, *Dazzle*, Mrs. Bancroft, *Pert*, Mr. Kendal, *Charles Courtly*, Mrs. Kendal, *Lady Gay Spanker;* Sept. 29, revival of 'An Unequal Match'—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, *Blenkinsop* and *Hester Grazebrooke*—and 'To Parents and Guardians,'—Mr. Arthur Cecil, *Tourbillon.*

1878: Jan. 12, 'Diplomacy,' adapted by Bolton and Savile Rowe, from Sardou's 'Dora'—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, *Orloff* and *Zicka*, Mr. Kendal, *Captain Beauclerc*, Mrs. Kendal, *Dora*—a great success.

1879: Jan. 11, a revival of 'Caste'; May 31, a revival of 'Sweethearts'—Mr. Bancroft, *Harry Spreadbrow*—with 'Good for Nothing'—Mrs. Bancroft, *Nan*—and the farce 'Heads and Tails'; Sept. 27, 'Duty,' adapted by James Albery from Sardou's 'Bourgeois de Pont Arcy.' Neither Mr. nor Mrs. Bancroft appeared, and the play was only a qualified success.

This was the last production under the Bancroft management at the Prince of Wales's. The increase in the salaries of actors, and the ever growing demand for luxury of stage appointments, rendered the expenses so heavy that even when the little theatre was filled night after night,* there was but a scant margin

* After the production of the 'School for Scandal,' the price of stalls was half-a-guinea.

of profit. Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft accordingly looked about for a larger theatre, and fixed on the Haymarket, the traditional home of English comedy. They entirely reconstructed and re-decorated the house, and their abolition of the pit occasioned some disturbance on the opening night. The following is a list of their productions at the Haymarket, no mention being made of the summer seasons, during which it was their custom to sub-let the theatre :—

1880 : Jan. 31, a revival of 'Money'; May 1, a revival of 'School'; Nov. 27, 'School' resumed after the vacation, and the 'Vicarage' revived—Mr. Bancroft, *George Clarke.*

1881 : Feb. 5, a revival of 'Masks and Faces'—Mr. Bancroft and Mr. Arthur Cecil for some time played the parts of *Triplet* and *Colley Cibber*, week and week about ; June 11, a revival of 'Society'; Nov. 26, a revival of 'Plot and Passion'—Mr. Bancroft, *Fouché;* with 'A Lesson,' adapted by F. C. Burnand from 'Lolette,' by Meilhac and Halévy—Mrs. Bancroft, *Kate Reeve.*

1882 : Jan. 19, a revival of 'Ours'—Mrs. Langtry's first appearance on the stage, as *Blanche Haye;* April 25, Sardou's 'Odette'—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, *Lord Henry Trevene* and *Lady Walker*, Madame Modjeska, *Lady Henry Trevene;* Oct. 7, a revival of the 'Overland Route'—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, *Tom Dexter* and *Mrs. Sebright.*

1883 : Jan. 20, a revival of 'Caste'; April 14, a revival of 'School'; May 5, Sardou's 'Fédora,' translated by Herman Merivale—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, *Jean de Siriex* and the *Countess Olga Soukareff*, Mrs. Bernard Beere, *Fédora;* Nov. 24, Pinero's 'Lords

and Commons'—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, *Tom Jervoise* and *Miss Maplebeck.*

1884: Feb. 16, a revival of 'Peril'—Mr. Bancroft, *Dr. Thornton;* May 3, a revival of the 'Rivals'—Mr. Bancroft, *Faulkland;* Nov. 8, a revival of 'Diplomacy'—Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft, *Henry Beauclerc* and *Lady Henry Fairfax.*

1885: Feb. 28, a revival of 'Masks and Faces'; April 25, a revival of 'Ours'; May 30, a revival of 'Sweethearts' and 'Good for Nothing,' with 'Katherine and Petruchio'; June 20, farewell performances of 'Diplomacy'; July 13, farewell performances of 'Masks and Faces'; July 20, a special farewell performance on the retirement of Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft from management. The programme consisted of the first act of 'Money,' performed by a number of the most distinguished actors and actresses who had played under the Bancroft management; a selection from 'London Assurance,' played by Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, Mr. Hare and others; the last two acts of 'Masks and Faces,' played by Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft and the Haymarket Company; an address in verse by Mr. Clement Scott, delivered by Mr. Henry Irving; a humorous speech by Mr. J. L. Toole; and Mr. Bancroft's own farewell address. Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft are at present (August, 1886) living in retirement.

Of Mrs. Bancroft as an actress of burlesque, we cannot speak from personal recollection; but we do not need the hundred testimonies which echo that of Dickens, quoted above, to convince us that she must have possessed a piquancy and elasticity of spirits as rare as they were delightful. These were the earlier and better days of burlesque; but Mrs. Bancroft felt in her-

self the longing and the power for better things. The success of Mr. Robertson's plays afforded her the desired opportunity of devoting herself entirely to comedy, and she took prompt advantage of it. The Robertsonian formula included two heroines in each comedy: one ideal, the other practical; one sentimental, the other humorous. The practical-humorous heroine —*Mary Netley, Polly Eccles, Naomi Tighe*—always fell to the lot of Mrs. Bancroft, whose alert and expressive face, humid-sparkling eye, and small compact figure seemed to have been expressly designed for these characters. She possessed, too, the faculty of approaching the border-line of vulgarity without overstepping it—an essential gift for the actress who has to deal with Robertsonian pertnesses—and wherever feeling was called for she proved a mistress of tears as well as of laughter. During her later career she was very successful in more than one character in which pathos and dignity were at least as necessary as humor. Her *Countess Zicka* in 'Diplomacy' was an achievement in which great intelligence helped to cloak a certain physical incongruity; and her *Peg Woffington* in 'Masks and Faces' and *Jenny Northcott* in 'Sweethearts,' though they erred here and there on the side of over-emphasis and caricature, deserve to be remembered as performances of remarkable versatility and charm. As a female comedian in the strict sense of the English word—much narrower, it need scarcely be said, than that of the French *comédienne*—Mrs. Bancroft deserves one of the highest places among the actresses of her generation.

Mr. Bancroft is an actor of limited range, but, within that range, of remarkable intelligence, refine-

ment and power. His face is not very mobile and his features are so marked that the most elaborate make-up is powerless to disguise them, while his voice, though strong and resonant, is of a somewhat harsh and croaking quality. These peculiarities, combined with his tall and spare figure, were of the greatest service to him in embodying the languid, cynico-sentimental, military heroes of Robertson. The playwright no doubt indicated, but the actor may fairly be said to have created, this original and essentially modern, if not altogether pleasing, type. Some of the *Chalcot-Hawtrey-Poynts* mannerisms have clung to Mr. Bancroft in his more recent impersonations, and once or twice, as when he essayed *Loris Ipanoff* in 'Fédora,' he has been tempted out of his proper sphere. These slips, however, have been very rare, and throughout his career he has more than held his own among the distinguished actors whom his liberal policy of management attracted to his theatre. Quiet humor, subdued feeling and unflagging intelligence are his distinguishing qualities,—what he lacks in grace he makes up in manliness. *Orloff*, and afterwards *Henry Beauclerc* in 'Diplomacy,' *Sir Frederick Blount* in 'Money,' *Faulkland* in the 'Rivals,' *Sir George Ormond* and afterwards *Dr. Thornton* in 'Peril,'—these may be mentioned as among his best non-Robertsonian parts. Unquestionably the best of all, however, is his *Triplet* in 'Masks and Faces,' a masterpiece of quaint and subtle characterization full of those touches of nature in which the ludicrous and the pathetic blend into one.

As a manager Mr. Bancroft had the luck to find and the skill to seize a golden opportunity. He

catered liberally and intelligently to the demand for completeness of presentation and luxurious realism of appointments which came into existence along with the would-be realistic school of social comedy. We have seen how he fought a long and gallant fight against the encroachments of the French drama. It was inevitable that he should ultimately have to yield; and if some of us are inclined to accuse him of surrendering too utterly and unconditionally, we must reflect that no "outsider" can realize the difficulties which beset the art of management.

WILLIAM ARCHER.

Among the actresses, I should certainly place Mrs. Bancroft and Mrs. Kendal in the foremost rank, their specialties being high comedy. Mrs. Bancroft I consider the best actress on the English stage; in fact I might say on any stage. She is probably thirty-eight years of age. She commenced her profession as a burlesque actress, and was one of the best we have ever seen in England. When she took the Prince of Wales's Theatre she discarded the burlesque business, and, to the amazement of everyone, proved herself the finest comedy actress in London. Her face, though not essentially pretty, is a mass of intelligence. Her husband, Mr. Bancroft, is an admirable actor in certain parts—*Capt. Hawtree*, for instance. He is the heavy swell of the English stage.

E. A. SOTHERN, in 'Birds of a Feather,' *pp.* 51–2.

Mrs. Bancroft in the line of broad comedy is a delightful actress, with an admirable sense of the

humorous, an abundance of animation and gaiety, and a great deal of art and finish. The only other actress in London who possesses these gifts (or some of them) in as high a degree is Mrs. John Wood, who is even more broadly comic than Mrs. Bancroft, and moves the springs of laughter with a powerful hand. She is brilliantly farcical, but she is also frankly and uncompromisingly vulgar, and Mrs. Bancroft has more discretion and more taste. The part most typical of Mrs. Bancroft's best ability is that of *Polly Eccles*, in 'Caste,' of which she makes both a charming and exhilarating creation. She also does her best with *Lady Franklin*, the widow with a turn for practical jokes, in 'Money,' but the part has so little stuff that there is not much to be made of it. Mrs. Bancroft is limited to the field we have indicated, which is a very ample one; she has made two or three excursions into the region of serious effect, which have not been felicitous. Her *Countess Zicka*, in a version of Sardou's 'Dora,' is an example in point.

The *Century Magazine*, January, 1881.

When 'Masks and Faces' was first revived at the Prince of Wales's Theatre, old playgoers first saw the capabilities of an excellent comedy. It could clearly be humanized and made natural without offence. I can recall Mr. Bancroft's *Triplet* as far back as that. It was moulded on exactly the same lines as now, but the actor had not sufficient confidence to convince everybody how good a performance it was. Webster's was an actor's *Triplet;* Bancroft's was a broken-down gentleman, as pathetic a picture as was ever drawn by Thackeray. On the occasion of the second

revival Mr. Bancroft had almost subdued his nervousness. His scenes with *Peg* with the manuscripts, and with *Mabel Vane* with the sherry and biscuits were exquisitely touching, and I could quote criticisms, were it necessary to do so, in order to prove that there were appreciation and honesty even on the critical bench of that day. But the Webster "bogey" hung over the scene. He was thrust into the faces of all who dared to believe that Bancroft could perform any part but that of a nineteenth century swell. People with the best intentions were interested but not convinced. Once more the play is revived, and Bancroft's *Triplet* becomes the talk of the town. A dozen critics dare say now what one feebly whispered then. We have arrived at liberal and independent days, and the public, guided by honest criticism, know just as much about acting as the critics themselves. A most artistic performance is the *Triplet* of Mr. Bancroft. What he conveys so admirably is the idea of a man who has been a jolly fellow, but who has been crushed by misfortune. His temperament is light, airy, enthusiastic and sanguine, but the *res augusta domi* have been too much for him. He is prematurely saddened by distress. He is a man and he is gentle. Emphatically he is a gentle-man. Never was a man so buoyed up by hope as Mr. Bancroft's *Triplet.* He does not cringe or whine. When *Peg Woffington* chaffs him about his manuscripts he shows some reverence for the calling of author. When *Mabel Vane* encourages his literary vanity the genial fellow, mellowed by his wine, rhapsodizes and eulogizes the poets' calling. When sunshine steals into the poverty-stricken garret no one is so gay as

James Triplet. But it is one thing to understand a part and another to give it artistic expression. If you want to see a bit of delicate and suggestive art, watch how *Triplet*, ravenous with hunger, slips some of the biscuits into his pocket, and, looking into vacancy, says: "For the little ones." If this were flung at the heads of the audience the idea would fail. But Mr. Bancroft touches every sympathetic chord in the whole house. It can no longer be said that this excellent actor is merely a "haw, haw" swell, though of course there are critics careless or indiscriminating enough not to see that the actor has utterly discarded his "stiff and angular method."

CLARE LINCOLN, in *Dramatic Review*, March 7, 1885.

MR. LAWRENCE BARRETT.

TO LAWRENCE BARRETT.

When Burbage played the stage was bare
Of font and temple, tower and stair;
  Two backswords eked a battle out,
  Two supers made a rabble-rout,
The throne of Denmark was a chair!

And yet, no less, the audience there
Thrilled through all changes of despair,
  Hope, anger, fear, delight and doubt
    When Burbage played!

This is the actor's gift — to share
All moods, all passions, not to care
  One whit for scene, so he without
  Can lead men's minds the roundabout,
Stirred as of old those hearers were,
    When Burbage played!

AUSTIN DOBSON.



LAWRENCE BARRETT
As Cassius in "Julius Cæsar."

Main

MR. LAWRENCE BARRETT.

In the two decades that have elapsed between the ending of the civil war and the time of this writing, of many notable careers that have had their development upon the American stage that of Lawrence Barrett is one of the most interesting. It is none the less interesting because happily it is not only not ended, but is in its period of most active and energetic growth. No present estimate of Barrett's place in his art or of his relation to our stage can have other than a passing interest, and must be made to seem insufficient and unsatisfactory, when considered a little time hence in the light of his higher transition. John McCullough, Edwin Booth and Lawrence Barrett have been the three recent figures of our stage. The first is taken untimely away, the second is about to retire at the zenith of a splendid career, and the third is the man of opportunity. A scholar, a man of wide cultivation, an indefatigable student of his art and implacable in his ambition, Barrett now comes singly to the front in the height of his powers. It must be easily apparent that whoever would now set forth any consideration of his place upon the stage of our country should be embarrassed by the reflection that for all that Barrett has attained, his story can at present be but left untold.

Barrett is essentially the student and the scholar

of our theatre. Whatever we may owe to the genius of Booth, it is apparent that in the process of the elevation of the drama the most potent force that may be now discerned is Barrett. In the proper belief that a star is unimpaired in effect for being one of a constellation, he has more thought of the presentation of a drama than of the presentation of Barrett. To this end he has labored with unswerving fidelity, and we must look to another stage than ours for a like example of unrelenting study, incessant labor and unthinking self-denial.

Lawrence Barrett was born in Paterson, New Jersey, in 1839, of Irish parents, and his earliest connection with the stage was in the capacity of call-boy in a Pittsburgh theatre. He started at the bottom, and, like others who have achieved the greatest eminence in his profession, his ascent is all the more emphatic and complete for having been so humbly begun. Such an experience implies a very comprehensive education in itself, but Barrett has always been possessed of the student's disposition. The arduous duties of so hard working an actor as Barrett leave ordinarily only the time required for rest or necessary distractions. Barrett, however, has found time enough to become a thorough master of English literature from the point of view of a student who makes a specific study of it, as well as a well-read man in all general directions. A great deal of his study has been devoted to matters specially collateral with his profession, and he is, we repeat, the student upon our stage, and for that reason a very potent and effective personality in its present development.

Barrett's first appearance in New York was on Jan-

uary 20, 1857, at Burton's old Chambers Street Theatre, where he appeared as *Clifford* in the 'Hunchback.' Two months later Burton engaged him for his new theatre (the Metropolitan), and he began there as *Matthew Bates* in 'Time tries All,' on March 2, subsequently playing *Piers Wharton* in 'Wat Tyler,' *Reynolds* in De. Walden's 'Wall Street,' and *Tressel* to Edwin Booth's *Richard*, on that actor's return in May, 1857, from his memorable visit to California. During this and the ensuing season he supported Booth, Cushman, Burton, Murdoch, Charles Mathews, Hackett and Davenport.

In 1858 he joined the company of the Boston Museum as leading man, but for the following four years was seen in New York at the Winter Garden Theatre, making steady progress and playing a vast round of parts. Shortly after the war ended he gravitated to California, where a wondrous era of prosperity had declared itself, and where his success was remarkable. His popularity was unbounded, and with John McCullough he undertook the management of the California Theatre, backed and sustained by the efforts and encouragement of the first citizens of San Francisco, of whom several conceived for him a warm personal friendship, upon which his hold has never weakened. During the golden days that immediately preceded the completion of the Pacific railroads, the Barrett & McCullough management achieved the most brilliant results, but it was a partnership that could not endure, the ambition of each necessarily impelling him to the East.

Barrett's transition from the leading ranks to leadership was effected naturally and easily after

his share in the brilliant history of Booth's representations in his memorable theatre had ended. He met everywhere throughout the United States with immediate and cordial recognition, and the foundation of his reputation is as broad as the country itself. But, as already pointed out, Barrett's career may not be set forth now. A later writer may more fitly concern himself with it, and find in the fruition of the hopes and ambitions that now dominate our popular and successful artist much matter whereto to address himself.

And yet it would be wrong to close without saying that Mr. Barrett has done more than any one else in America to present the higher drama under conditions of artistic completeness, and to stimulate the literary and artistic development of a stage impressed with his own character and taste. What he has achieved in this direction, so far, he has effected without a theatre, and it has been so serious and remarkable an achievement that it is earnestly to be hoped that he may attain, as he so earnestly desires, to the possession of a house of the drama in this metropolis. Heretofore he has led his cavalcade from town to town the whole year round, subjected to the wear and tear of travel, the vicissitudes of varying theatres, and of constant change from character to character.

Nevertheless he has given us an admirable variety —a variety such as only the theatre of Mr. Irving has afforded, and one which has included the best representations that we have seen upon our own stage, the most profitable to its reputation, and the fullest of promise for its future. It is only needful in support

of this belief to point to Mr. W. D. Howells's 'Yorick,' to Mr. Young's 'Pendragon,' to Mr. Boker's 'Francesca da Rimini,' to the 'Wonder,' to the 'King's Pleasure,' and to the 'Blot in the 'Scutcheon.'

All of these are distinctively productions by Mr. Barrett according to his own lights, and to be considered as such, and as apart from his impersonations of the standard characters in which he has won his well-deserved fame, and which comprise all there are from *Hamlet* down to *Henry Lagardère*. That all this wonderful industry has been hand in hand with a large and liberal cultivation of his art, and a growing aversion to all merely perfunctory representation of the drama, is what makes Mr. Barrett so interesting and important a figure of his time in his profession in this country. He has broad capabilities and a fine ambition, and he, if any one, can make a theatre. It is a present necessity of New York that it should have a house of the drama where the best that is or can be written shall be presented in complete and artistic detail, and with such assurance of its worth and importance that the place where it is done shall attain to the dignity of a permanent institution.

WM. M. LAFFAN.

Though Mr. Barrett's acting in the character of *Yorick* deserved high praise before, it was a pleasure to see last night how much he had improved upon his earlier conception of it. At every sentence one felt the new power which the player possessed over the thoughts he designed to express. The clearness in

and Mr. McCullough lack, apparently, a certain creative instinct—the desire to bring fresh and salient characters upon the stage. Mr. Barrett, happily, does not lack this instinct. He is even a much more potent force among the American dramatists than Mr. Irving is among the English dramatists. Mr. Irving is not afraid to produce, occasionally, a play by Mr. Wills, or by the Laureate; yet he has given, after all, little encouragement to the English writers of drama. Mr. Barrett, on the other hand, has taken pains to establish his reputation in novel and experimental works, like the 'Man o' Airlie,' 'Dan'l Druce,' 'Yorick's Love,' 'Pendragon,' and 'Francesca da Rimini.' Three of these dramas were written by Americans, and all three are worthy of more respect than one is inclined to offer to many new plays which are now popular. The selection and the production of such dramas show, lucidly, that Mr. Barrett has a fine literary sense, a proper regard for the duty that an actor of distinction owes to contemporary writers, and a moral courage with which actors are not commonly gifted.

GEORGE EDGAR MONTGOMERY, in the *Century Magazine*, April, 1884.

Mr. Lawrence Barrett's *Richelieu* is splendidly sufficing. He does not give a tumultuous and Boanerges-lunged version of the character. He does not rant; but when the occasion demands it, as in the famous 'Curse of Rome' passage, he rises to the required height of passionate energy. He displays from beginning to end wonderful versatility and elasticity of mind, passing from phase to phase of the many-sided character without any sudden jerks or

spasmodic transitions. He is alternately, and always in perfect naturalness, the inflexible, unscrupulous, and implacable despot of France, whose ambition has decimated her nobility, but whose politic and beneficent administration has raised her from beggary to prosperity; the affectionate protector of *Julie;* the kindly patron of *Friar Joseph;* the dry humorist; the astute expert in diplomacy and statecraft; the poetaster full of literary vanity; the broken-down and almost dying valetudinarian, and ultimately the lion at bay, turning on his foes and triumphantly rending them. I can not look on Mr. Lawrence Barrett's impersonation of *Richelieu* as a "conventional" one; because I do not know what the convention is in this case. I have seen *Richelieus* who roared and *Richelieus* who raved, some that grimaced and grinned, and others that maundered, and not a few that were dismally didactic. I find in Mr. Lawrence Barrett a *Richelieu* who shrinks from exaggeration, whose elocution is perfect, whose action is poetically graceful, and who never forgets that Armand Jean du Plessis—why on earth did Lord Lytton make him call himself "Armand Richelieu?"—was a gentleman of long descent and of the highest breeding.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA, in the *Illustrated London News*, May 10, 1884.

Lanciotto becomes a great character under the masterly treatment of Mr. Barrett. It is a noble soul cramped in an ignoble case that drives *Lanciotto* upon the breakers of destiny. There is a purity, a loftiness, a womanly delicacy of nature behind that misshapen trunk, which the brunt of battle, the scoff of malice,

and the slights of happy fortune have not hardened, nor sullied nor degraded. The soul is above its condition, and in the fiercest hour of its trial slays its wronger, not as the act of mad vengeance, but as a sorrowful deed of justice, the doing of which is the one relief of its heavy shame for the sin of others. It is an ideal character, truly, but for all that it is wonderfully human, and is acted with wonderful fidelity to its poetic compromise between the real and the desirable qualities, disposition of man. In the stress of widely originating but closely converging emotions the character is exceptionally fine. It is at once heroic and tender, daring and enduring, savage and docile, violent and loving, morbid and yet just, true and generous. From the humiliation and agony of self-despite to the mad rapture of a free accepted love, from the sting of a bitter fool's malicious jest to the sweet balm of a trusted brother's love, from faith to doubt, from suspicion to despair, this creature whose love has been crowded back upon his heart from the four corners of the earth is borne along by the impulse of unkindly fate, but moves all times, pitiful and sympathetic, with the inner character shining beautifully clear, nobly true. That Mr. Barrett defines these varied phases with just the degree of feeling each requires, with its due proportion of art and nature, its quality of sentiment and its measure of force, must, we think, be admitted by all who observe him with heart as well as with intelligence. He superbly reveals the character in its light and darkness of emotional being. He shows the greater sensitiveness that makes the judgment shift its place and the greater truth that makes self unworthy when rooted

faith is torn from its embrace, with a skill and power and completeness that keep company only with that true fire of heaven, the genius of intelligence. It is in the introspective character of the work that Mr. Barrett is chiefly admirable. No one for a moment would question his dramatic ability, and there is no more reason to question his interpretive power. His action, indeed, is so exquisitely tempered by the art of expression, and so appreciably warmed by sincere feeling, that it is a window through which one may look beyond the actor upon the conception, upon the ideal, and one who has this happy privilege is truly to be pitied if he stands without to trouble himself with what defects he can find in the man. Mr. Barrett was fully enough complimented last evening. Applause was frequent, and on one occasion the actor was four times recalled, but he received no greater distinction than his performance merited.

The *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, November 25, 1884.

There are very few tragic actors of our time, and among them the most ambitious and the most active spirit, on the American side of the Atlantic, is Lawrence Barrett. One proof of this is the fact that no season is allowed to pass in his professional experience without the production of a new character, to augment and strengthen his already extensive repertory. Mr. Barrett has not restricted himself to *Hamlet*, *Richelieu*, and the usual line of "star" parts. Long ago he brought out the 'Man o' Airlie,' and gave a noble and pathetic personation of *Harebell*. More recently he presented himself as *Yorick*, in the tragedy of 'Yorick's Love,' made by Mr. W. D. Howells, on the

basis of the Spanish original. His revival of Mr. Boker's 'Francesca da Rimini,' three years ago, is remembered as one of the most important dramatic events of this period. His production of Mr. Young's tragedy of 'Pendragon,' in which he acted *King Arthur* with brilliant ability and fine success, gave practical evidence of a liberal desire to encourage American dramatic literature. Within a brief period he has restored to the stage Robert Browning's superb tragedy, 'A Blot in the 'Scutcheon.' Last season he resumed Shakspere's *Benedick* and brought out the charming little drama of the 'King's Pleasure'; and early in the present season he effected a fine revival of Mrs. Centlivre's comedy of the 'Wonder.' Mr. Barrett's range of characters is, in fact, remarkable. Among the parts acted by him are *Cassius*, *Hamlet*, *Richard III.*, *Shylock*, *Benedick*, *Richelieu*, *Don Felix*, *Alfred Evelyn*, *Raphael* (in the 'Marble Heart'), *Yorick*, *James Harebell*, *Lord Tresham*, *Gringoire*, *David Garrick*, *Lanciotto*, *Claude Melnotte*, and *Cardinal Wolsey*. He has, of course, played many other parts. When he was at Booth's Theatre, years ago, he acted *King Lear*, and when he was associated with Charlotte Cushman he acted *Macbeth*. He was the first in this city to impersonate *Dan'l Druce*, and he is the only representative of *Leontes* (in 'A Winter's Tale') who is remembered by the present generation of play-goers. This enumeration will readily suggest to experienced judges the prodigious labor and the astonishing variety of talents and accomplishments—exerted through many years with strenuous zeal and patient devotion—that were necessarily involved in the actor's achievement of his present high position

and bright renown. To-night Mr. Barrett has taken another important step in his professional career, making a sumptuous revival of Victor Hugo's romantic drama of 'Hernani,' and winning new laurels by his impersonation of its central character.

Of the three men, *Don Carlos*, *Don Leo* and *Hernani*, who love the heroine of this drama, each is in a different, way noble. It would be difficult to decide which is the noblest, but the character of *Don Leo* is the most substantial and complex of the three. He has the most of mind, the most of passion, and the most of the capacity to feel and suffer. Youth, when it loves, is often enamored of itself. Manhood, when love strikes it in its full maturity, worships its object with a desperate idolatry. *Don Leo* proved equal to great trials and a stern test of honor, but he can not rise to the supreme height of the final sacrifice. This part was played by Macready when 'Hernani' was acted at Drury Lane in 1831, and its opportunities are certainly great. Lawrence Barrett, however, has elected to play *Hernani*, and he carried it to-night with splendid dash and touching fervor. The sonorous elocution was almost wholly discarded in favor of a vehement, impulsive delivery, and at such points as the challenge to *Carlos*, the reproach of *Zartz* and the avowal of the outlaw's royal station he spoke and acted with the true eloquence of heart, and he evoked a tumult of sincere public applause. The revival of 'Hernani' was brilliantly effected and it will endure.

WILLIAM WINTER, in the *New York Tribune*, Dec. 29, 1885.

This sense of the dignity of his calling is doubtless

the motive which has inspired and supported him amid all trials and difficulties, and enabled him now to enjoy, not only substantial pecuniary reward, but the sweets of gratified ambition. His material prosperity affords matter for general congratulation, as it is a complete refutation of the stale and stupid slander, the sole refuge of ignorant managers, that the public cannot appreciate and will not support dramatic entertainments of a high order.

Each of Mr. Barrett's engagements in this city in recent years has been signalized by the production of some play unfamiliar to the ordinary theatregoers and of positive value. 'Francesca da Rimini' was an experiment which few managers would have risked, and the 'Blot in the 'Scutcheon' was a piece of which the ordinary manager had probably never heard. If he had heard of it, he would have jeered at any proposal to play it. Mr. Barrett, however, thought it would be appreciated, and the result of the performance abundantly justified his opinion. Then he presented the 'King's Pleasure,' a most dainty and delightful bit of fancy, which met with instant approval. This year he has revived 'Hernani,' Hugo's romantic tragedy, which is certainly a novelty to most of the rising generation, and has again scored an indisputable success.

The *Critic*, New York, Feb. 13, 1886.

Lawrence Barrett, in *Yorick*, is adequate at every point, and he gives a noble and touching performance. His ideal of the comic actor, who deeply feels the serious aspect of life and would like to play tragedy, is especially right and fine in this respect, among others,

that it is precisely the sort of man whom a commonplace young woman (and most young women, both in plays and out of them, are commonplace) would like, but could neither love nor understand. The gentle humility of a fine nature is expressed by him with a certain sweet and natural self-depreciation, so that *Yorick* is made very wistful, and he would be almost forlorn but for his guileless trust and his blithe, eager, child-like spirit. An ordinary girl would be flattered by the love of such a man, and would be quite content with him, as long as she did not love somebody else. The pitiable character of this disparity is especially enforced, though indirectly—which is all the better art—by the free play, the abandonment, that is given by the actor to an honest, confiding, simple, happy heart. *Yorick*, to be sure, is made to talk too much when his hour of trial and misery comes ; but that is the fault of the writer and not the actor. Sorrow speaks little. *Macduff*, in one of the great master's scenes, simply "pulls his cap upon his brows." Had Lawrence Barrett never before now shown himself to be a true artist, a deep student of human nature, a superb executant of dramatic effect, he would have proved his noble worth and signal power by one effort that he made last night—by the splendid self-control and the refined art with which, throughout the verbose second act of this tragedy, he subordinated copious declamation to intense feeling. Often before now he has played this part ; never, surely, with such wisely-tempered ardor and judicious while brilliant force. It was an exploit not only delightful in itself but very valuable as an example.

WILLIAM WINTER, in the *New York Tribune*, Aug. 3, 1886.

As for the Jew, him we have and he is worth our gaze. Tall moving with slow strength across the boards in front of the scene that does duty for the Rialto, standing in a quietude almost statuesque in its pose, robed in his black Jewish gaberdine bordered with red, and marked with a red cross on the elbow, a black and yellow cap on his gray, bent head, his richly jewelled hands betraying the nervous eagerness of his nature as they clutch and twine upon his long knotted staff, with the withdrawn look of his strong-featured face, and the reserved intelligence dwelling in his eyes, Lawrence Barrett's *Shylock*, it may be seen, wants neither dignity nor originality. The shabby meanness which he avoids in his dress he avoids also in his conduct and speech. . . . .

Mr. Barrett also pictures before us a *Shylock* who restrains his eagerness this side of tremulousness, by so much the more heightening his intensity; who retains a dignity of old age in his outward guise and the dignity of a rooted purpose too wise to unfold itself abruptly even in the growing tightening of suspense in the trial scene.

It is, in a word, Mr. Barrett's glory in this part to have given us that Shaksperean refinement and truth of characterization which permits us to understand and to appreciate the peculiar justification and temptation the man had whose deed is yet repulsive and condemnable.

Shaksperiana, November, 1886.

MR. EDWIN BOOTH.

In these, and many immortal words like these,
May wondering thousands, with delighted care,
Note thy chaste charms of classic-postured ease,
Thy sculptured face, thy rich voice, nor forget
That thou of Kean, Macready, and all who wear
The buskin grandly in art's annals yet
Beamest the radiant equal and true heir!

EDGAR FAWCETT.



EDWIN BOOTH.

Main

MR. EDWIN BOOTH.

Edwin Thomas Booth was born on his father's farm in Harford County, Maryland, Nov. 13, 1833. Although not dedicated by his parents to the stage, his apprenticeship began in early youth. The care of a growing family keeping his mother at home, young Edwin was sent forth while almost a child himself to act as guide, companion and friend to the most erratic genius that ever illumined the theatre in any age. As mentor, dresser, companion, the boy lived almost a servant's life in hotels, dressing-rooms, among the wings, in constant and affectionate attendance upon him to whom the early drama of America owes so much of its glory. The applause received by the father rang in the lad's ears as a sweet prelude to that which was ere long destined to be his own. Indeed, he seemed already to participate in the glory of his father by the close and anomalous relation.

Curious and characteristic anecdotes are given of this strange union. Incidents were continually happening which were preparing the character of the boy for his own eventful career. Seeing much of the vicissitudes of the actor's life in that day of the drama's hardest probation in America, he learned lessons which were to be useful to himself hereafter. Pathos and humor were strangely brought together

in these tours of the elder Booth, accompanied by his bright-eyed, watchful assistant. The irregularities and vagaries of Junius Brutus Booth are made familiar to the reader of dramatic history, by the annalist and biographer; but few knew the serious side of that strange nature, its home-love, its parental tenderness, its sweet indulgence, the royally stored mind, rich with the learning of foreign literature, and graced with a wealth of expression which made his learning a well-spring from which all could drink. Thus the theatre was Edwin Booth's school-room, the greatest living master of passion his tutor, and the actors his fellow-pupils, divided from him only by the disparity of years. Constantly ignoring any question of Edwin's ever becoming an actor, his father acquiesced willingly in the boy's amateurish acquirement of the violin, and of a negro's mastery of the banjo. These tuneful accomplishments, aided by the voice of the young musician, in some of the then familiar plantation melodies, amused the leisure and gratified the paternal pride of a fond and sometimes over-indulgent father.

In many ways these simple graces served to assist the young guardian in keeping his father within doors, when his restless spirit urged him forth upon some of those erratic wanderings which seem now almost like moody insanity; when, straying far into the morning through the sleeping city; striding for hours up and down an open deserted market-place, morose, silent, he was followed by the pleading, faithful lad, who feared that some ill would result from such rashness. *Lear* in the storm, with no daughter's ingratitude as an urging cause, seems an apt parallel here. When the summer vacation came, or when the

father drifted into idleness as he drifted into labor, Edwin was sent to school; but to be as suddenly dragged thence, whenever one of the fitful engagements began. One can easily fancy how much more potent were the lessons of the theatre than those so irregularly learned in regular school; and it is demonstrated truly in his case that an actor's life is in itself a liberal education.

No wonder the boy grew up observant, grave, thoughtful and melancholy beyond his years. As no thought had been given to his career, so at last it was determined by accident, and by no suggestion of his father's. On Sept. 10, 1849, Edwin Booth appeared as *Tressel* to his father's *Richard III.* on the stage of the Boston Museum. No trumpet of herald announced this important event; its necessity arose from the somewhat insignificant fact that the duties of prompter made it necessary that some one should lighten the shoulders of that official of a double burden, and the obscure actor was replaced by one who that night entered upon a career the consequences of which will affect the American stage more profoundly than any other event connected with it. The success of this maiden effort did not seem to win the father to the lad's side. Without openly condemning the step, the elder Booth tacitly showed that he did not approve of it. The report of Edwin's hit induced managers of other cities to request that father and son should appear together on occasions. This was stubbornly resisted. On one occasion an old friend, then managing a Western theatre, asked Mr. Booth to allow him to bill Edwin with his father. He was met by the usual curt

refusal, but, after a moment's pause, and without any sense of the humor of the suggestion, Booth said that Edwin was a good banjo player, and he could be announced for a solo between the acts.

His first appearance in *Richard III.* was the result of an accident, quite as unexpected as his original effort. His father, billed at the National Theatre, New York, for *Richard*, suddenly resolved, just before the play began, that he would not go to the theatre; entreaties were in vain. "Go act it yourself," said the impracticable father to his confused and half distracted son. On carrying this message to the disappointed manager, that official, in his distress, accepted the alternative. The audience was satisfied, and the play went on to the end with no demonstration of disapproval. A brief experience in the stock company at Baltimore, uneventful and comparatively unsuccessful, preluded the departure for California, from which so many results important to Edwin Booth's subsequent career were to flow. The Booths sailed in 1852, crossed the Isthmus, and appeared at San Francisco soon after their arrival.

The time for this visit was ill-chosen. Financial depression had succeeded the early marvellous prosperity of the Golden State, and the drama, despite a fine company of actors, was languishing with the other industries of the Pacific coast. A few performances in San Francisco, some appearances in Sacramento, given to poor audiences, and unremunerative both to actor and manager, make up the result of the only visit of the elder Booth to the far West. Returning home alone and believing fully in the future prosperity of California, he left his two sons, Junius Brutus

and Edwin behind him. The usual vicissitudes of the actor in those pioneer days were experienced by Edwin Booth; unpaid services in the cities, sad and trying wanderings in the mountains, where the surroundings were of the rudest, the audience the most indulgent, sickness, want, cold, hunger—these were the early discipline of the sensitive and gifted child of genius. During this time the news of his father's death reached him, bringing home to his heart the first great sorrow it had ever known. Now filling a subordinate place in a stock company, at a mere pittance, now pushed prematurely forward into the parts his father had made famous, he journeyed hither and thither, reaching even as far as Australia, where his welcome was most cordial; then to the Sandwich Islands, with a king for his patron; and so back once more to the land of gold, where, in a happy hour, he yielded a ready ear to that voice which had been for years calling him to the scenes of his father's glory, and where his crown was in waiting for him.

His first appearance after his return was made in Baltimore as *Richard III.* Later, while playing in Richmond under the management of Joseph Jefferson, he met with the lady who became afterwards his wife, the lovely and accomplished Mary Devlin, then a member of Mr. Jefferson's personal and dramatic family; and at length, early in the spring of 1857, he made his bow as a star in Boston, the city where he had made his first essay as an actor, and where his father's memory was still cherished. Opening as *Sir Giles Overreach*, he was completely successful. He followed this auspicious beginning with a round of

characters in which he sustained the reputation he had already gained. On May 4, 1857, he made his bow before a New York audience as *Richard III.* at the Metropolitan Theatre. The writer may be pardoned if he here connects himself with the subject of this memoir in recalling the importance of the scene of which he was a witness and a participant, in an humble way, playing *Tressel* in a powerful cast of the tragedy.

Although Booth had but recently returned to the East, rumor had brought the story of his fame and success; and the stock company of the theatre awaited eagerly his appearance at rehearsal. The scene will long live in the memory of those who were present. A slight, pale youth, with black flowing hair, soft brown eyes full of tenderness and gentle timidity, a manner mixed with shyness and quiet repose, he took his place with no air of conquest or self-assertion, and gave his directions with a grace and courtesy which have never left him. He had been heralded by his managers in the papers and on the fences as the "Hope of the Living Drama," greatly to his dismay, but his instantaneous success almost justified such extravagant eulogy; and while curiosity had brought many to see the son of him who had been their whilom idol, they remained to pay tribute to an effort which was original and spontaneous.

He arrived at an opportune moment. Forrest was beginning to lose his grasp upon the sceptre which he had held so long; age and infirmity were showing their effect upon his once perfect frame, while his style was derided by a new generation of theatre-goers. The elder Wallack was playing his farewell

engagement, Davenport was wasting his fine talents in undignified versatility; and a place was already made for a man who had original and creative power. Pursuing for the next few years the career of a wandering player, with frequent returns to New York, and new additions to his repertory, Edwin Booth was acquiring new experience and valuable confidence in his powers. He was married in 1860 to Miss Devlin; and in 1861, he visited London, having made an ill-considered and hasty agreement with a manager there which forced him to come out at a comedy theatre, the Haymarket, in a part unsuited for a first appearance, although one of his best performances, *Shylock*. He paid too little heed to the importance of his London engagement, and it was only as it neared its close, when he had satisfied the people by his magnetic performance of *Richelieu*, that he woke to the magnitude of the event. He was obliged to quit the scene of his success, at the moment of its arrival. Returning to his own country, he found the land agonized in the throes of civil war. During this first visit to England his only child Edwina was born. His home on his return was made at Dorchester, Mass. Here he left his young wife, whom he never saw again, to go to his New York engagement in February, 1863. His wife's death was bitter affliction which drove him to increased labor in his art as some poor solace for an irreparable loss.

He now took a lease of the Winter Garden Theatre, New York, having already purchased with Mr. J. S. Clarke, the Walnut Street Theatre, in Philadelphia. His partners in the New York scheme were Messrs. Clarke and William Stuart. In November, 1864, oc-

curred the notable production of 'Hamlet,' which ran one hundred consecutive nights. It was adequately mounted, excellently cast, and fixed the fame of Mr. Booth as the *Hamlet* par excellence of the American stage. No such revival of a Shaksperean play had taken place since the days of Charles Kean, at the old Park. While acting at the Boston Theatre, in April, 1865, the news was brought to him of the great calamity which had befallen the country, and inflicted an incurable sorrow upon himself and his family. He at once resolved to abandon his profession forever; but after nearly a year of retirement, at the urgent solicitation of friends throughout the whole country, he appeared as *Hamlet* at the Winter Garden Theatre on Jan. 3, 1866. The reception and performance were remarkable.

William Winter says of this event—"Nine cheers hailed the melancholy Dane upon his first entrance. The spectators rose and waved their hats and handkerchiefs. Bouquets fell in a shower upon the stage, and there was a tempest of applause, wherever he appeared. After this momentous return to the stage, he found a free-hearted greeting and respectful sympathy; and so, little by little, he got back into the old way of work, and his professional career resumed its flow in the old channel." This was a notable event in America's dramatic history. A series of revivals worthy of the refinement of any age succeeded each other at the Winter Garden Theatre. 'Richelieu' was given as never before in the history of the stage. Shakspere's 'Merchant of Venice' as a whole, with a fidelity unsurpassed in scenic and historic annals, ran for several weeks to large and delighted

audiences. At the summit of the success of these efforts to revive the glory of the earlier days of the drama, a fire broke out in the Winter Garden Theatre, which destroyed not only much valuable material, but delayed for a time the purposes of the ambitious actor, who had no less a desire than the highest achievement for his beloved art. Setting out on his provincial tours once more, he formed the plan to create out of the ashes of his ruined theatre an edifice more costly and enduring. Selecting a site for his new house, he placed the earnings of his richly productive career in the lap of his new enterprise. Over a million of dollars were spent in the construction of the noblest temple yet erected to the drama in America. With the same liberality which had stopped at no sacrifice in the erection of the building, the actor now lavished large sums on the stage and its settings. The theatre was opened Feb. 3, 1869, with a gorgeous production of 'Romeo and Juliet' from the original text. He was himself the *Romeo*, his future wife, Mary McVicker, the *Juliet;* the gifted Edwin Adams the *Mercutio*, with a supporting cast of unusual excellence. The success of the theatre was instant and enduring. For the years during which Mr. Booth retained its control, the receipts were very large, although the lavish outlay left no margin of profit. 'Winter's Tale,' 'Hamlet,' 'Julius Cæsar,' 'Merchant of Venice,' 'Much Ado about Nothing,' and other of the great Shaksperean plays were presented in an unprecedented style of magnificence, admirably cast. The original texts in all instances were restored, thus antedating all English efforts in that line by many years. Disaster, owing to unskilful busi-

ness management, and the impossibility that one man should remain always at the helm, wrecked this noble venture. But although bankruptcy resulted to the enthusiastic founder, the glory of having given such a temple and such a series of revivals to the American stage, will be linked inseparably with the renown of Edwin Booth.

His subsequent appearances in San Francisco after twenty years' absence, and in London, where he presented a round of his favorite parts with great eclat, and his crowning glory in presenting himself before the critics of exacting Germany, lead up so near the present hour of writing, that their exploits must await another annalist for their recording.

The noble subject of these records is still in the zenith of his strength. He lives to lead the American stage of to-day, with the same power as of old, and with the same love on the part of his followers to sustain him. Eulogy and praise stand mute in the presence of such merits. *Nil nisi mortuis bonum*, is the admonition when the chroniclers gather up the records of a great man's life, after the race is run. The biographer who shall truly write the story of Edwin Booth's career will have little need to observe this caution. Of him it may be said aside from his great place and merit as the greatest exponent of our art of to-day, that

> His life was gentle; and the elements
> So mixed in him that nature might stand up,
> And say to all the world 'This was a man.'

LAWRENCE BARRETT.

On the 10th of September, 1849, Edwin Booth made his first appearance on any stage, in the character of *Tressel*, at the Boston Museum, under the following circumstances. Mr. Thoman, who was prompter and actor, was arranging some detail of the play, and becoming irritable at having so much to do, said abruptly to Edwin, who was standing near him, "This is too much work for one man; *you* ought to play *Tressel*," and he induced him to undertake the part. On the eventful night the elder Booth dressed for *Richard III.* was seated with his feet upon a table in his dressing-room. Calling his son before him, like a severe pedagogue or inquisitor, he interrogated him in that hard, laconic style he could so seriously assume:—

"Who was *Tressel?*"

"A messenger from the field of Tewksbury."

"What was his mission?"

"To bear the news of the defeat of the king's party."

"How did he make the journey?"

"On horseback."

"Where are your spurs?"

Edwin glanced quickly down, and said he had not thought of them.

"Here, take mine."

Edwin unbuckled his father's spurs, and fastened them on his own boots. His part being ended on the stage, he found his father still sitting in the dressing-room, apparently engrossed in thought.

"Have you done well?" he asked.

"I think so," replied Edwin.

"Give me my spurs," rejoined his father; and

obediently young *Tressel* replaced the spurs upon *Gloucester's* feet.

ASIA BOOTH CLARKE: 'The Elder and the Younger Booth,' *pp.* 125-26.

Edwin Booth has made me know what tragedy is. He has displayed to my eyes an entirely new field; he has opened to me the door to another and exquisite delight; he has shown me the possibilities of tragedy. Though he has not yet done all that he has pointed at, there are moments in his acting in which he is full of the divine fire, in which the animation that clothes him as with a garment, the halo of genius that surrounds him, not only recalls what I have not of others; not only suggests, but incarnates and embodies my highest notions of tragedy.

ADAM BADEAU: The 'Vagabond,' 1859.—Edwin Booth.

. . . . . He got out old wigs—one that Kean had worn in *Lear:* the very one that was torn from his head in the mad scene, and yet the pit refused to smile; he found me his father's *Othello* wig, and put it on to show the look. There was a picture of the Elder Booth hard by on the wall, and the likeness was marvellous.

Ibid: 'A Night with the Booths.'

Booth cast his first, and the only vote of his life, for Abraham Lincoln, in the autumn of 1864. A short time after, on the night of Nov. 25, 1864, the three Booth brothers appeared in the play of 'Julius Cæsar'—Junius Brutus Booth as *Cassius*, Edwin as

Brutus, and John Wilkes as *Marc Antony*. The theatre was crowded to suffocation, people standing in every available place. The greatest excitement prevailed, and the aged mother of the Booths sat in a private box to witness this performance. The three brothers received and merited the applause of that immense audience, for they acted well, and presented a picture too strikingly historic to be soon forgotten. The eldest, powerfully built and handsome as an antique Roman, Edwin, with his magnetic fire and graceful dignity, and John Wilkes in the perfection of youthful beauty, stood side by side, again and again, before the curtain, to receive the lavish applause of the audience mingled with waving of handkerchiefs and every mark of enthusiasm.

ASIA BOOTH CLARKE: 'The Elder and the Younger Booth,' *p.* 159.

In a discussion with Henry Tuckerman of New York, on the character of *Hamlet*, that gentleman, who had witnessed many of the old actors, observed to Booth that they all stood during the soliloquies, and inquired if it were not possible to alter this. On the next representation of 'Hamlet,' Booth, seated, began the soliloquy "To be or not to be." Mr. Tuckerman, watching the play, could not conceive how *Hamlet* could rise from that chair with propriety and grace. When at the words, "to sleep, perchance to dream," after an instant of reflection, during which the mind of *Hamlet* had penetrated the eternal darkness vivid with dreams, he rose with the horror of that terrible "perchance" stamped upon his features, continuing, "Ay, there's the rub!" His friend was

satisfied that the actor had caught the inspiration of the lines in that reflective pause. Booth also introduced sitting on the tomb in the graveyard when, with his face half buried on *Horatio's* shoulder, he speaks, as if to his own heart, the words, "What! the fair Ophelia?" His resting previously on the tomb is most natural and graceful, and, imbued with these qualities, it cannot fail to be effective.

Ibid, vol. ii., pp. 153–4.

Bulwer's 'Richelieu,' though written in that author's pedantic, artificial manner, and catching the groundlings with cheap sentiment and rhetorical platitudes, is yet full of telling dramatic effects, which, through the inspiration of a fine actor, lift the most critical audience to sudden heights. One of this sort is justly famous. We moderns, who so feebly catch the spell which made the Church of Rome sovereign of sovereigns for a thousand years, have it cast full upon us in the scene where the Cardinal, deprived of temporal power and defending his beautiful ward from royalty itself, draws around her that Church's "awful circle," and cries to *Baradas*,

> Set but a foot within that holy ground,
> And on thy head — yea, though it wore a crown —
> *I launch the curse of Rome!*

Booth's expression of this climax is wonderful. There is perhaps nothing, of its own kind, to equal it upon the present stage. Well may the king's haughty parasites cower, and shrink aghast from the ominous voice, the finger of doom, the arrows of those lurid, unbearable eyes! But it is in certain intellectual

elements and pathetic undertones that the part of *Richelieu*, as conceived by Bulwer, assimilates to that of *Hamlet*, and comes within the realm where our actor's genius holds assured sway. The argument of the piece is spiritual power. The body of *Richelieu* is wasted, but the soul remains unscathed, with all its reason, passion, and indomitable will. He is still prelate, statesman, and poet, and equal to a world in arms.

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, May, 1866.

Booth, in his first season of *Hamlet*, is a very romantic recollection. He was the ideal of the part to many; his natural melancholy, his great magnetic eyes, and his beautiful reading, made him a host of admirers. I remember well, in the first year of our war, when we were profoundly miserable and frightened, what a relief it was to go and see Booth in 'Hamlet.' In some passages he was superb. He gave the play a new rendering, fresh and admirable. When I first saw Fechter in it, whom I liked infinitely less than Booth, I wondered anew at the genius of Shakspere, who could have written two such different and distinct *Hamlets*. Mr. Booth gave a new feeling to the relation to *Ophelia*. You felt when you saw him play it that *Ophelia* was a poor creature; that if she had been grander, nobler, and more of a woman, the play need never have been written.[8] I afterward saw him in *Othello*, and, against all sounder criticism, I pronounce *that* his very greatest part, greater than his *Iago*, greater than his *Hamlet*, greater than Salvini's *Othello*, because infinitely less terrible, and, shall I say

brutal? for, although I am an *adorer* of Salvini, I did find the last scene of his *Othello brutal.*

Booth's *Othello* was the very spirit of Venice. It was the Middle Ages. It was the Orient. It was all that is delicious in the land of gold and pearl—of silks from Damascus, perfumes from Persia. It was Moorish, it was the Adriatic and its history. I do not know anything which brought all the reading of a lifetime before one so forcibly. That dark face, to which the Eastern robe was so becoming, seemed at once to be telling its mighty story of adventure and conquest. It was a proud, beautiful face. *Desdemona* was not worthy of it. He was supple, suspicious, *Eastern* from the beginning; that he loved as only a son of the South *can* love, was written all over him, and therefore his jealousy and his tragedy was prefigured in him. His quiet life after his marriage, his reading his papers and telling *Iago* how "*Cassio* went between us very often," was so expressive that it reminded one of those hot, heavy summer afternoons which hold a thunder storm.

M. E. W. SHERWOOD, in the *New York Times*, Jan. 20, 1875.

Instead of being the slave of "tradition," I found him constantly neglecting old traditional points —of which his manner after the Play Scene, when his exultation would not give him time to wait until the crowd had wholly dispersed, was, perhaps, the most notable example—for effects which commended themselves better to his true matured intelligence. Another instance may be given in his delivery of the words, "I'll rant as well as thou," which were not

howled and ranted, as is commonly the case, but uttered with a profound contempt for the *ranting* of *Laertes*. These two are few among many of his deviations from "tradition." To my mind—and especially on the second occasion of my witnessing his performance—Edwin Booth was eminently natural, and to be looked on as an admirable exponent of the more approved "new school."

Throughout he was the Prince, without any display of stilted dignity, but graceful in his courtesy and gentlemanly in his condescension. His charm of manner in this respect was specially to be remarked in the scenes with *Rosencrantz* and *Guildenstern*, in his excellently delivered and modestly reticent advice to the players, and in his scene with *Osric*, whom he treated with the utmost courtesy, displaying his contempt of the fop in suppressed tones of voice, and playful byplay with *Horatio*, instead of anger or impatience. His exquisite tenderness toward *Ophelia*, to whom the words, "Go to a nunnery," were uttered as the warning advice of a man who really loved her, and not as indignant denunciation, was such as to reach every heart. The same may be said of the Closet Scene with the *Queen*, in his display of filial forbearance, which was made as prominent as was consistent with his purpose of reproach.

J. PALGRAVE SIMPSON, in the *Theatre*, December, 1880.

[Mr. Edwin Booth's *King Lear* thus far surpasses any performance which he has given to a London audience.] It is true that there is no single quality displayed in it of the possession of which he had not

before given evidence; but on no former occasion has so much been demanded of him at once, and on no former occasion has his genius been so unflagging. The word we have just used, "genius," is one against the too bounteous use of which we have protested; and there are few words which lose their value more by being scattered broadcast. If we had hesitated to apply it to Mr. Booth's acting before he had appeared as *Othello* and *King Lear*, we should have hesitated no longer after he had done so. In his rendering of both characters there was apparent that native sense of grandeur and poetry which not even the highest talent can achieve, but the combination of which with all talent can acquire in the direction of art and artifice may certainly deserve the name of genius. In *Othello*, as we observed, the actor's power on a few occasions seemed to flag; in *King Lear* there are no such occasions. From first to last the character, with its senility, its slowly and surely increasing madness, its overwhelming bursts of passion, its moving tenderness and feebleness, and, underlying and seen through all these, that authority to which *Kent* makes marked reference, was seized and presented with extraordinary force. So complete are the interest and the illusion that it is only when the play is over that the fine art which rules the storm of passion is apparent, and that such delicate inventive touches as the suggestion to *Lear's* wandering wits of the troop of horse shod with felt are remembered. The character is of course the more difficult because it begins at such high pressure in the very first scene that any coming tardy off after that scene has been successfully played would be unhappily accented. Nothing could well be

finer than Mr. Booth's rage and disappointment with *Cordelia*, and the half-insane curse which follows them, and throughout the scene his senile yet royal bearing, and that grace and happiness of gesture to which we have on other occasions referred, were marked.

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK, in the *Saturday Review*, Feb. 19, 1881.

Without assuming, however, to state the exact elements of the genius by which Booth's impersonations are illumined, it may be suggested that its salient attributes are imagination, intuitive insight, spontaneous grace, intense emotional fervor, and melancholy refinement. In his great works—in *Hamlet*, *Richelieu*, *Othello*, *Iago*, *Bertuccio*, and *Lucius Brutus*—these are conspicuously manifest. But perhaps the controlling attribute, the one which imparts individual character, color, and fascination to his acting, is the gently thoughtful, retrospective habit of a stately mind, abstracted from passion and toned by mournful dreaminess of temperament. The moment this charm begins to work, his victory as an artist is complete. It is this that makes him the veritable image of Shakspere's thought in the glittering halls of Elsinore, on its midnight battlements, and in its lonesome, wind-beaten place of graves. It is at once the token and the limit, if not of his power, most certainly of his magic.

He has, it is true, shown remarkable versatility. He can pass with ease from the boisterous levity of *Petruchio* to the height of *Hamlet's* sublime delirium on the awful confines of another world. *Othello*, the Moor, *Iago*, the Venetian, *Richelieu*, the French priest, and *Don Cæsar*, the Spanish gallant—emblems of a

great variety of human nature and experience—are all, as he presents them, entirely distinct individuals. . . . . Under the discipline of sorrow, and through "years that bring the philosophic mind," Booth, like all true artists, drifts further and further away from what is dark and terrible, whether in the possibilities of human life or in the ideal world of imagination. It is the direction of true growth : it is the advance of original individuality : it is the sign of happy promise. In all characters that evoke the essential spirit of the man—in all characters, that is, which rest on the basis of spiritualized intellect, or on that of sensibility to fragile loveliness, the joy that is unattainable, the glory that fades, and the beauty that perishes—he is easily peerless.

WILLIAM WINTER : 'Edwin Booth in Twelve Dramatic Characters,' *pp.* 49–51.

MR. AND MRS. DION BOUCICAULT.

(AGNES ROBERTSON.)

Prolific Boucicault ! what verse may scan
The merits of this many-sided man ?
A stage upholsterer of old renown,
Is what an enemy would write him down.
But let the enemy remember still
How much we owe to Dion's cunning quill.
What tho' in many of his plays, perchance.
There may be hints of foraging in France !
Let us be mindful of the genius shown
In those as well as others all his own.
There is a land the playwright has made sweet,
And found a laurel in the bog and peat.
Not yet have audiences joy out-worn
To see the ' Shaughraun ' and the ' Colleen Bawn ' ;
And *Dazzle* has retiréd from the scene,
While enter *Conn* and *Myles-na-Coppaleen.*

WILLIAM L. KEESE.


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DION BOUCICAULT.

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MR. AND MRS. DION BOUCICAULT.

Mr. Dion Boucicault, one of the most prolific and popular of English playwrights and an actor of much humorous force, was born in Dublin, Dec. 26, 1822. In 1841, when he was only nineteen years old, he saw his comedy, 'London Assurance,' brought out at Covent Garden; and he has produced two, three, four or more plays in every one of the forty-five years which have elapsed since this first and great success. This is not the place, nor have I space, to call the roll of Mr. Boucicault's countless plays, original and adapted; suffice it here to say that of his earlier pieces a few of the best remembered are the 'Irish Heiress' (1842), 'Old Heads and Young Hearts' (1844), and the 'Vampire' (1852), in which the author made his first appearance as an actor (June 14, 1852, Princess's Theatre, London). The next year he sailed for America with his wife, Miss Agnes Robertson, one of the little group of very clever young actresses with which Mrs. Charles Kean had surrounded herself at the Princess's.

Miss Agnes Robertson was born at Edinburgh, Dec. 25, 1833; that happy Christmas day giving to the world a girl who, in her later life, was to bring merriment, peace, good-will to many thousands of men and women by her mimic art. She was born to

the boards, as it were, singing in public before she had reached her eleventh year, and coming out as an actress before she was twelve. This event took place at Hull; but further than this nothing is known, either as to the part she played or her success in it. A few years later, in January, 1851, she made her first appearance in London at the Princess's Theatre, then under the management of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean, as *Nerissa* in the 'Merchant of Venice.' Here she remained, playing the lighter parts of juvenile comedy, until she sailed for America. She appeared at Montreal in September, and at Burton's Theatre, New York, on Oct. 22, 1853, as *Maria*, in the 'Young Actress.' This was also the part with which she opened her engagement at the Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia, April 10, 1854. In October of that year we find her at the Broadway Theatre, New York, where she played *Milly*, in the 'Maid with the Milking Pail,' *Andy Blake*, in the 'Irish Diamond,' *Don Leander* and *Bob Nettles* in 'To Parents and Guardians.' For her benefit on Nov. 10, 1854, Mr. Dion Boucicault made his *debut* in New York as *Sir Charles Coldstream*, in 'Used Up.' Miss Robertson played in various places throughout the United States during the following years; her longest engagements being in New York, however; and it was there that she created new parts, by which she made herself famous. Among these may be noted, in the year 1858, *Jessie Brown*, in the 'Relief of Lucknow,' at Wallack's Theatre (formerly Brougham's Lyceum), on Feb. 22; *Ada Raby* in the 'Vampire,' in September, and *Pauvrette*, in the play of that name, in October, at Niblo's Garden. In these plays, written or adapted

by himself, Mr. Boucicault appeared as *Nana Sahib*, the *Vampire* and *Bernard.*

During the following year she made farther advances in her art, and gained greater successes before her Winter Garden audiences, as *Dot*, in the 'Cricket on the Hearth,' Sept. 14; as *Smike* in 'Nicholas Nickleby,' in November, in which character she moved her audience as deeply in one direction as did Joseph Jefferson as *Newman Noggs* in quite another—and as *Zoe* in the 'Octoroon,' Dec. 5—one of Mr. Boucicault's best plays, in which he himself played *Wah-no-tee.*

A little later she touched the top of her powers, in the delineation of *Jeanie Deans*, in the 'Heart of Midlothian,' first produced at Laura Keene's Theatre, Jan. 9, 1860; and as *Eily O'Connor*, in the 'Colleen Bawn,' played first at the same theatre, March 29, 1860. In these dramatizations—one from Scott and one from Gerald Griffin—Mr. Boucicault appeared as the *Counsel for the Defence* and *Miles-na-Coppaleen.* Both plays had a long run for those days—the former of fifty-four nights, the latter of thirty-eight; both had unusually strong casts; and in both the performance of Miss Agnes Robertson over-shadowed all the others, memorable as they were. It was in the latter part—*Eily O'Connor*—that she played for the last time, then, in New York, and bade farewell to the American stage, at the Winter Garden, on July 16, 1860.

In the same parts, Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault came before a London audience, at the Adelphi, Sept. 10 of that year, and won praise from the press and plaudits from the public. At the same theatre, on

Monday, Nov. 18, 1861, they appeared in the 'Octoroon.' On Feb. 10, 1862, Mrs. Boucicault played the 'Dublin Boy.' On Saturday, March 1, she assumed the character of *Violet*, in the 'Life of an Actress'—a play of Mr. Boucicault's, in which he appeared as *Grimaldi*. On Sept. 15 of the same year, the 'Relief of Lucknow' was revived at Drury Lane, Mrs. Boucicault playing her old part, *Jessie Brown;* on Dec. 22 the play appeared at Astley's Westminster Theatre, the management of which Mr. Boucicault then assumed. At Astley's, too, she gave *Jeanie Deans*, in the 'Heart of Midlothian,' on Monday, Jan. 26, 1863. At the Princess's, March 22, 1865, Mr. and Mrs. Boucicault appeared in his delightful drama, 'Arrah-na-Pogue'; and at the Lyceum Theatre, Sept. 18, 1866, she acted *Jane Learoyd* in his 'Long Strike.'

They appeared at the Gaiety Theatre, London, on May 4, 1872, in 'Night and Morning,' an adaptation of 'La Joie Fait Peur,' and later the same season in various other of Mr. Boucicault's productions. In September, 1872, after an absence of twelve years from America, they appeared at Booth's Theatre, New York, in 'Arrah-na-Pogue,' and in October Mrs. Boucicault repeated her old triumphs as *Jessie Brown*. Thereafter they played elsewhere throughout the United States. Mr. Boucicault produced the 'Shaughraun' at Wallack's Theatre, New York, Nov. 14, 1874, and acted in it himself. Returning to London, Mrs. Boucicault played the part of *Moya*, in the 'Shaughraun,' at Drury Lane, Sept. 4, 1875. In June, 1878, Mrs. Boucicault appeared in 'Love and Life,' a dramatization of one of Crabbe's 'Tales of

the Hall,' by Mr. Tom Taylor. She was again at Booth's Theatre, New York, in Feb., 1879, where she was seen as *Eily O'Connor* and others of her old favorite parts; and she soon after quietly retired from the stage. Mr. Boucicault produced a five-act comedy called the 'Jilt,' in San Francisco, in the summer of 1885, and took it to New York and to London in the following year.

Mr. Boucicault is a playwright of exceeding dexterity and a comedian of consummate skill. His plays are so many as to be almost numberless; they are farces, comedies, operas, burlesques, dramas and melodramas; they are original, adapted from the French, and taken from novels; they are sometimes very good, and sometimes very bad. The best of them may be divided into two groups: the Irish plays and the plays in which an attempt is made to continue the traditions and to fill the formulas of the so-called "old comedies." Of these latter, 'London Assurance' is the best known, although it is no better than the 'Irish Heiress,' and not so good as 'Old Heads and Young Hearts.' They have all a certain glittering hardness, which has suggested the remark that they were the work of an old heart and a young head. The Irish plays, on the other hand, have a gentleness, a softness, a pathos, a humanity not seen in Mr. Boucicault's other work. These qualities are most abundant in 'Arrah-na-Pogue,' which is only a trifle broader and finer than the 'Colleen Bawn' or the 'Shaughraun.' As an actor Mr. Boucicault has confined himself to parts in his own plays, adroitly prepared for his own acting.

Miss Agnes Robertson was a talented, a cultivated,

and a most attractive actress: endearing herself to the generation of play-goers who knew her, and who loved her, by the womanly charm of her own individuality,—ever present in all her personations, appealing to every heart before her. Her range of representation was not extensive, but, within the limits of her powers, she was, in all ways, admirable as the artist, winning as the woman. It was this winsome womanliness, shining softly and subtly out through every environment of costume and of character, which made an unconscious but imperative demand on all sympathies, and even called forth affection; filling up our appreciation of and praise for the accomplished actress. She seemed, on the scene, in every variety of part and of play, the ideal embodiment of innocence, artlessness, sweetness, simplicity; moving with a grace, speaking with an intelligence, which took captive mind and heart, at once. In the juvenile comedy of her earliest days, and in boys' parts, she was bright and bewitching; showing a mingled dash and delicacy most rare on the boards. In the commonplace Protean personations, at one time so popular, she gave a bouncing Irish boy, a stolid German lad, a sprightly Scotch lassie, and all the rest; each done daintily, each with its own proper *patois*, all graceful to look at. As the pert and pretty *soubrette*, she was charmingly coquettish, capricious, captivating. But in none of these, nor in similar light characters, did she seem to show real humor—rarest gift of all to her sex, indeed; it was in serious, and even sad, scenes, that she was more at home; and her nature appeared more appropriately to lend itself, even then, to pathetic parts. Her sweetness, her susceptibility,

her submission under suffering, her uncomplaining courage and unrepining resignation beneath undeserved persecution, her pretty, pathetic, girlish charm; all this formed her more fully than any actress I have known, for such parts as *Dot*, *Eily O'Connor*, *Jeanie Deans*, and made them, in her person, the most touching of scenic assumptions. In these parts—and in *Smike* as well,—the wretched, starved, beaten, crushed creature, yet with a human heart, torn by tenderness and by thankfulness,—she was wont to win the tribute of tears from unwonted and unwilling sources.

Vivid as are these personations in my memory, I yet always see Agnes Robertson clad in the costume of *Jessie Brown*: the sweet and simple Scotch girl, patient, cheerful, heroic, loveable, moving quietly amid all the misery of besieged Lucknow. The Indian mutiny had, just then, fed us full of horrors; so that all men were well attuned to the key-note of this poor play. This was taken from a story fresh from the field; which told how a small English garrison, holding out to the last against sickness, starvation, the shots of encircling Sepoys, was saved, just at the end, by the English advance, the coming of which was perceived, at the critical instant of surrender, by the quick ear of a Scotch servant-maid, who heard before any other, the far-away strains of the bagpipes, leading the van of the friendly force of Highlanders.

I see Agnes Robertson, as I write—in my mind's eye—sitting silently in the centre of the beleaguered camp, amid worn women, wailing children, disheartened men; the deep stillness of the scene, after all the foregoing action and turmoil: speaking plainly

of something imminent: deadly or delightful, we do not know: only that it is *near*. The Scotch girl, listless and speechless, seems suddenly to listen; starts slightly, bends her neck, her eye dilating, her hand half held up; listening more and more intently,—to *what*, we can not hear, nor those about her. More and more eager she grows; she leaps to her feet, her frame fills and towers, her whole soul is in her eyes, her face flames gladly, madly; with an exultant cry that thrills us, she tells them that safety and life have come at last! Then, the shrill bag-pipes squeak, nearer, and nearer, the musketry rattles all around, the scurrying Sepoys swarm in before the hurrying Highland bayonets flashing all about, all is tumult, triumph, thanksgiving; in the midst, rapt and radiant, stands *Jessie Brown*, fixed fast forever in our fancy so.

BENJAMIN ELLIS MARTIN.

Among the reminiscences of the past twenty years few figures present themselves as more lovely, delicate and gifted than that of Agnes Robertson—Mrs. Boucicault. She was a *genre* picture, so small, *gentil*, pretty and acceptable. I first remember her in *Effie Deans*, I think, a profoundly affecting and impressive bit of acting. Then in many pieces where she danced, sang, and performed variety parts. She had the prettiest of ballad voices, was always unaffected in the use of it. She never condescended to the trill or cadenza, but sang her song through serenely, and according to the text. A bird would not give his "native wood-notes wild" more charmingly than she did. Her *Smike* was a terribly tearful thing; I never liked to



AGNES R. BOUCICAULT.

Main

see it; it haunted me; but her *Jessie Brown*, in the 'Siege of Lucknow' (I am not sure about my names, but I remember the thing), was most beautiful. I see now the pretty little figure, the big foot and ankle, the delicate little head with a plaid shawl thrown over it, as weakened by starvation, the Scotch girl, with her second sight, and her preternaturally sharpened senses, hears the sound of the pibroch. Then comes up a very pretty piece in which she and Mr. Boucicault played beautifully, called 'Pauvrette.' The scene laid in Switzerland, the scenery beautiful. "The avalanche — that thunderbolt of snow," was admirably managed. The young couple are snowed up for the winter, and the wild storm that raged was not greater than the excitement which prevailed in the hearts of the audience as to their probable fate. I believe it was supposed that they finally escaped.

M. E. W. SHERWOOD, in the *New York Times*, July 4, 1875.

We have heretofore alluded to the Miss Agnes Robertson of long ago; and now a memory steals in upon us of her *début* at Burton's, and of her enchanting performance in the Protean play of the 'Young Actress.' Of the half-dozen parts assumed, the Scotch lassie and the Irish lad still haunt us. The highland fling of the one, and the 'Widow Machree' of the other, were charming to see and hear; and, indeed, Miss Robertson was charming altogether.

WM. L. KEESE: 'Life of Burton,' *p.* 90.

Then somewhere along here, I think in a summer season, comes a vision of Boucicault playing the 'Vam-

pire,' a dreadful and weird thing, played with immortal genius. That great playwright would not have died unknown had he never done anything but flap his bat-like arms in that dream-disturbing piece.

M. E. W. SHERWOOD, in the *New York Times*, Jan. 20, 1875.

For himself, Mr. Boucicault selects the character of *Myles-na-Coppaleen*, the plebeian Irishman of scampish propensities, who alternates native shrewdness and pathos after a fashion familiar to those who are accustomed to the theatrical Hibernian. His consummate slyness, his dexterity at prevarication, and his evident enjoyment when he feels that he has baffled too curious an investigator, are admirably delineated, though he is less "rollicking" than most of the artists who have shown in Milesian character.

The *Times*, London, Sept. 11, 1860.

Mr. Boucicault's portraiture of the, by turns, obsequious, courteous, and indignant *Grimaldi* was in all respects a masterpiece of histrionic ability. What is technically called the "make-up" was complete; and his manner throughout was true to the natural bearing of a man fallen into misfortune, but conscious of noble birth and noble feelings. He showed, too, some extraordinary powers. While teaching his pupil he has to point out to her how Rachel delivered a particular speech and finds it necessary to resort to the original French. This feat he brilliantly accomplished. His nervous anxiety for his *débutante's* success on the provincial stage, and his passionate disappointment when he misses her from the next scene and learns the story of her abduction were both admirably delin-

eated. These things place Mr. Boucicault in the front rank as an artist of versatile abilities and a comprehensive mind.

The *Athenæum*, London, March 8, 1862.

It may be said that he reached the climax of his fame as an actor and dramatic author in 1860 with the production of the 'Colleen Bawn.' His merits as an actor were probably best exhibited in that play, and his later production, the 'Shaughraun.' Mr. Boucicault cannot be said to be entitled to the distinction of being designated an original writer. His most popular plays are adaptations; but no modern dramatic author has said better things on the stage than Mr. Boucicault in those plays.

CHAS. EYRE PASCOE: the 'Dramatic List.'—Boucicault.

For example: the usual price received by Sheridan Knowles, Bulwer, and Talfourd at that time for their plays was £500. I was a beginner in 1841, and received for my comedy 'London Assurance,' £300. For that amount the manager bought the privilege of playing the work for his season. Three years later I offered a new play to a principal London theatre. The manager offered me £100 for it. In reply to my objection to the smallness of the sum he remarked, "I can go to Paris and select a first-class comedy; having seen it performed, I feel certain of its effect. To get this comedy translated will cost me £25. Why should I give you £300 or £500 for your comedy of the success of which I cannot feel so assured?" The argument was unanswerable and the

result inevitable. I sold a work for £100 that took me six months' hard work to compose, and accepted a commission to translate three French plays at £50 apiece. This work afforded me child's play for a fortnight. Thus the English dramatist was obliged either to relinquish the stage altogether or to become a French copyist.

DION BOUCICAULT, in the *North American Review*, September, 1877.

Mr. Boucicault with his four hundred plays may be regarded as one of the most prolific writers in the whole history of literature. We know of no other pen that can approach his in this respect. There are plenty of playwrights who have written plenty of plays, unaccepted, and never likely to see the light of the foot-lights; but all of Mr. Boucicault's four hundred plays have been "played," and abused, and derided, and played again. They have been received as standard, and are likely to be long lived; while some of his characters are almost destined to be immortal. *Jesse Rural*, *Dolly Spanker*, and *Lady Gay* we venture to assert will live as long as *Sir Anthony Absolute*, *Lady Teazle*, or as *Tony Lumpkin* himself.

As a producer of plays and not as a player, will Mr. Boucicault be remembered by posterity; still Mr. Boucicault is by no means a poor player: his *Grimaldi* in his own 'Life of an Actress,' his *Nana Sahib* in 'Jessie Brown,' his *Bernard* in 'Pauvrette,' his *Spectre* in the 'Vampire,' his *Counsel for the Defence* in the 'Heart of Midlothian,' his *Myles-na-Coppaleen* in the 'Colleen Bawn,' his *Mantalini* in 'Smike,' and his *Wah-no-tee* in the 'Octoroon,' in other days,

were all strongly played; while in these days his *Daddy O'Dowd*, his *Kerry*, and his *Conn the Shaughraun* are inimitable. In all of these late plays in which he has himself assumed the central and titular part, his object, he claims, has been to elevate the stage Irishman to something like nature, "to give a truthful stage portraiture of Irish life, manner, and character; and to obliterate the gross caricature the public had received from the stage—a caricature that had been mainly instrumental in forming a popular and very false impression of Irish nature." His *Daddy O'Dowd* we consider a beautiful bit of character acting, equal to his *Kerry*, which was saying very much for it, and fit to rank with Fisher's *Triplet* or Jefferson's *Rip Van Winkle.*

LAURENCE HUTTON: 'Plays and Players,' *chap. xxv., p.* 208–10.

There has been no play since 'Rip Van Winkle' which has excited so much interest as this, and no character which is a more distinct figure in the mind than the *Shaughraun.* He is an Irish good-for-nothing, a young vagabond who is as idle as *Rip Van Winkle*, and who loves the bottle—not to *Rip's* excess—and who by his nimble wit and laughing, careless courage serves to good purpose a pair of very amiable lovers. There are knaves and wretches in the play, and ladies and lovers, and soldiers and a priest and old crones. There is some kind of story, as there is in an opera, but you don't remember very well what it is. It is only a background for the *Shaughraun* to sparkle on. Some grave critic remarked that as a play it had faults; it violated canons and laws, and wanted unity,

and did many things which it seems plays ought not to do. There are two plots, or threads, or catastrophes, and the mind, it appears, is distracted, and the whole thing could have been much better. Ah! had the painter only taken more pains! But, on the other hand, Mr. Critic, there is not a dull word or a dragging scene in it. It moves from beginning to end, and it is pure picture and romance all the way. There are, indeed, those dreadful moral difficulties which we have been called upon to consider in 'Rip Van Winkle.' Here is a lazy good-for-nothing, who has no trade or profession, or even employment, who has been in jail for his tricks more than once, who carries a bottle in his pocket, and poaches and fishes at his will, and he carries with him our admiration and sympathy, and puts our minds into any mood but that of severity and reproof. He is simple and generous and sincere, and brave and faithful and affectionate, indeed, but he is a mere Shaughraun after all.

Perhaps the only plea that can be urged in the defence is that the play leaves us more kindly and gentle. But if you return to the charge, and ask whether this might not have been done had the hero been a respectable and virtuous young man, keeping regular hours and reputable society, avoiding strong liquors and vagabondage, and devoted to an honest trade or a learned profession, the Easy Chair can only ask in return whether *Hamlet* might not have been a green-grocer. The charm and the defence of the 'Shaughraun' are those of 'Rip Van Winkle'—they are its humanizing character and influence. Here is the spectacle of knavery brought to naught, of faithful love rewarded, and all by means of simplicity, gen-

erosity, good-nature, and courage. Things are very perplexing if that is immoral. It is, in fact, a poem, a romance. The little drama is wrought, indeed, with all the consummate skill of the most experienced and accomplished of play-writers. The resources of the stage, machinery, surprises, whatever belongs to effect, are all brought most adroitly into play, and the spectator is compelled to admire the result of tact and experience in the construction of a drama. But it all deepens the romantic impression. The scene is Ireland, the story is one of love, the chief actor is an Irishman seen by the imagination; and it is one of the felicitous touches of the skill with which the work is done that from time to time, when the spectator is most intent and his imagination is all aglow, there is a faint breath from the orchestra, a waft of wild, pathetic Irish melody, which fills the mind with vague sadness and sympathy, and the scene with a nameless pensive charm. This is the stroke of true humor—the mingled smile and tear.

But as you sit and watch and listen, you become more and more aware that the key-note of the whole play is very familiar, and even what the Easy Chair has already said may suggest the essential resemblance, which gradually becomes fixed and absolute. Under a wholly different form, under circumstances entirely changed, in another time and country, and with a myriad divergences, the 'Shaughraun' is our old friend 'Rip Van Winkle.' It is recognized as readers of Browning recognize 'In a Spanish Cloister' in the dialect poetry. The motive of the two dramas is the same—the winning vagabond. In the earlier play he is more indolent and dreamy, and the

human story naturally fades into a ghostly tale; in the latter he is heroic and defined, and acts only within familiar and human conditions. As a study of the fine art of play-writing, you can easily fancy, as the performance proceeds, that an accomplished playwright, pondering the great and true and permanent success of 'Rip Van Winkle,' may have set himself to pluck out the heart of its mystery, and to win the same victory upon another field. You can fancy him sitting unsuspected in the parquet on Jefferson's nights, intently poring upon that actor's personation of the character that he has "created," studying it with a talent of infinite resource for the object in view, and gradually reproducing, under a wholly new and foreign form, the fascination of a spell that is peculiar to no country or clime, but inheres in human nature. It is doubtless a fancy only, but it holds with singular persistence. What is the *Shaughraun* but a jocund Irish *Rip*, or *Rip* but a *Shaughraun* of the Catskill?

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS, in *Harper's Magazine*, July, 1875.

MR. J. S. CLARKE.

Method with Clarke has ever been prime factor,
And method made him an artistic actor.
Gifted with skill to seize and to portray,
He gives his fine mimetic power full sway.
Thus finished pictures from his art arise,
Which lure the mind as they have lured the eyes.
A low comedian of that better school,
That does not think a laugh bespeaks a fool.

WILLIAM L. KEESE.

MR. J. S. CLARKE.

In the year 1850 the town of Belair, Maryland, was placarded with the following poster,—although the townsfolk may not have derived the same pleasure and advantage from its perusal as the present reader; the illiterate negro bill-sticker having posted every one upside down:

GRAND DRAMATIC FESTIVAL

AT THE COURT-HOUSE IN BELAIR,

Saturday, Aug. 2.

In compliance with the request of several gentlemen,

MR. EDWIN BOOTH

respectfully informs the inhabitants of Belair and vicinity, that he will give one entertainment as above, in conjunction with

MR. J. S. CLARKE.

The performance will consist of

SHAKSPEREAN READINGS, ETC.

PART FIRST.

Selections from RICHARD III.

Richard III. . . . . Mr. E. Booth.

Selections from MERCHANT OF VENICE.

Shylock . . . . . Mr. J. S. Clarke.

The celebrated dagger scene from MACBETH.

Macbeth . . . . . Mr. E. Booth.

Selections from Kotzebue's STRANGER.

The Stranger . . . . . Mr. J. S. Clarke.

Hamlet's Soliloquy on Death . . . . Mr. E. Booth.

Selections from Otway's tragedy of VENICE PRESERVED.

Jaffier . . . . . Mr. J. S. Clarke.

Selections from RICHELIEU.

Cardinal Richelieu . . . . . Mr. E. Booth.

The great Quarrel Scene from JULIUS CÆSAR.

Brutus . . . . . Mr. E. Booth.

Cassius . . . . . Mr. J. S. Clarke.

PART SECOND.

Yankee Stories, Etc.

Mr. Clarke's peculiar illustration of

"A Young Man's First Appearance as an Actor."

Cards of Admission, 25 cents. Children under twelve, 12½ cents.

Doors open at 7 o'clock.

Performance to begin at 8.

The two lads, for they were little more, who, burning with dramatic ardor, had not only undertaken to present such a programme to a rural audience, unused to any entertainment of a higher order than a travelling circus or conjurer, but had also ridden fifty miles under an August sun to procure printed programmes and tickets in Baltimore, were destined both of them to make their mark in the dramatic record of their time.

Of Edwin Booth, a worthier hand than mine has more worthily written. Mine be the congenial task to chronicle the capers of comedy. Comedy? say you,

with a programme like that confronting you. Yes, even so; although if truth be told, John Sleeper Clarke, like many another heaven-sent son of Thalia, with his lineage stamped on every line of his mirth-provoking countenance, passed through a period of calf-love for the sterner muse.

John Sleeper Clarke was born in Baltimore, Maryland, on Sept. 3, 1833, of very recent English extraction. His grandfather, Stephen Clarke, was a London merchant, and his mother was a granddaughter of John King, who held an official position under the East India Company.

His father died when he was three years old, and he was left to the care of his mother. Part, at least, of his education seems to have been received at the hands of a Mr. Kearney, an original sort of pedagogue, who wrote all his own school books, and encouraged his pupils in their juvenile attempts at dramatic representation. On one occasion, Mrs. Clarke records that Edwin Booth and John S. Clarke, dressed in the white linen trousers and black jackets then in fashion, recited, or rather enacted, with appropriate gestures, the quarrel scene of *Brutus* and *Cassius*. The elder Booth entered the crowded school-room unobserved, and, seating himself on the corner of a bench near the door, witnessed and enjoyed the performance. So that the Grand Dramatic Festival at Belair was in all probability by no means Mr. Clarke's first clutch at histrionic laurels.

In compliance with his mother's wishes he was educated for the practice of the law, and even went so far as to enter the office of Elisha B. Sprague, of Baltimore, but finally abandoned Themis for Thespis in

1851, when, at the Howard Athenæum, in Boston, he made his first appearance on the professional stage, as *Frank Hardy* in 'Paul Pry.' One cannot help wondering with what feelings the future comedian regarded the performance of the *Paul Pry* of the evening; and how much he may have unconsciously owed to him, when he made his own success in that part. His first regular engagement was at the old Chestnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia, where he appeared on Aug. 28, 1852, as *Soto* in a revival of Colley Cibber's play 'She Wou'd and She Wou'd not.' In the following January he succeeded John Drew, the elder, as leading comedian of the theatre, which then had a position only comparable to that held by Wallack's in New York, a rapid rise indeed for a young man of twenty, with less than a year's experience of his craft. In 1854 he left Philadelphia, and returned to his native city, as first low comedian of the Front Street Theatre. "His benefit in the following autumn was one of the most memorable events in Baltimore." Thus early and securely had he established himself as a favorite. In Aug., 1855, he returned to Philadelphia, where he became leading comedian of the Arch Street Theatre, and so remained until June, 1858, when in partnership with Mr. William Wheatley, he assumed the reins of management for the first time. During this period he occasionally starred through the South with great success.

In 1859 his connection with the Booth family, always friendly, was cemented by his marriage with Asia, daughter of Junius Brutus Booth and sister of Edwin. In 1861 he retired from the management of the Arch Street Theatre and took the great step in an

actor's life—his first appearance in the theatrical metropolis. He appeared at the New York Theatre and Metropolitan Opera House on May 15. It stood in Broadway opposite Bond Street, and on the site of the Metropolitan or Tripler Hall, originally erected for Jenny Lind's Concerts. Mr. Ireland records that his first part was *Diggory* in the 'Spectre Bridegroom,' and that he was received with hearty applause. "He was not merely a success, he was a revelation." Mr. George William Curtis wrote of him at the time in *Harper's Weekly:* "I consider Clarke by far the finest artist who has been seen on our boards since Rachel." The name of the theatre was subsequently changed to the Winter Garden; and on Aug. 18, 1864, he undertook its management in partnership with William Stuart, and his brother-in law, Edwin Booth. "During the occupancy of the Winter Garden Theatre by Booth and Clarke, the latter usually acted there from the month of August until Christmas, Booth following and playing until Easter, Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams and other attractions filling the intervening time. John S. Clarke sold his interest to Booth, and retired finally from the management early in the year 1867, a few months before the building was burned." During the season of 1864 and 1865 he appeared at this theatre among other parts as *Dromio of Syracuse* in the 'Comedy of Errors,' and as *Smashington* in 'Somebody's Coat' on Oct. 3; as *Paul Patent* in 'Love in Livery' on Oct. 10: as *Paul Pry* in the play of the same name on Oct. 24; as *Bob Tyke* in the 'School for Reform' on Oct. 25; as *Brown, the Broker,* in 'My Neighbor's Wife' on Oct. 31; in the four characters of *Jack Sheppard,*

Toby Twinkle, *Simon Purefoy* and *Timothy Brown* on Nov. 5; as *Jeremiah Beetle* in the 'Babes in the Wood' on Nov. 10; as *Bob Brierly* in the 'Ticket of Leave Man' on Nov. 12; in 'Clarke in Russia' as *General Jocco*, as *Jack Humphrey* in 'Turning the Tables,' as *Waddilove* in 'To Parents and Guardians' on Nov. 18; and as *Peter Plumley* in 'Single Life,' and as *Mr. Dove* in 'Married Life,' on Nov. 21. During this same brilliant engagement he played *Major de Boots* in 'Everybody's Friend,' one hundred nights, and he played *Jack Sheppard* and *Toodles* the same number of times. On the last night in 'His Jack Sheppard,' *Paul Patent* in 'Love in Livery,' *Simon Purefoy* and *Lord Sparkle* in 'A Roland for an Oliver.'

"In October, 1863, the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia was offered for sale. At such a precarious time, during a disastrous civil war, few men were willing to assume so great a risk; but John S. Clarke and Edwin Booth conjointly ventured to make the purchase, feeling that they would be lucky to be able to pay for it entirely in thirteen years. This they did, however, in three! In January, 1866, Booth and Clarke obtained the lease of the Boston Theatre at a rental of sixteen thousand dollars a year. Offers as high as twenty-six thousand dollars were made by other parties, but the directors preferred these two gentlemen, who managed now conjointly three first-class theatres in the three principal cities."

It is not generally known that Mr. Clarke made a visit to London in 1862, under an engagement to Mr. Dion Boucicault to appear there, but for some unexplained reason the comedian returned to his native

land without having played. So that it was not until October, 1867, that he made his bow before a London audience. This was at the St. James's Theatre, in the character of *Major Wellington de Boots*, which he had already played over a thousand times in his native country, two hundred and fifty or more performances having been given in New York alone. His triumph was as instantaneous in the English as in the American metropolis; in all probability no American actor ever won, or kept so enduringly, such a distinguished position on the English stage as Mr. Clarke. It is said that he visited England with his wife and family "on pleasure bent," and he had certainly no intention of remaining. His success, however, was so great that it would have been folly not to reap such a crop while the sun of public favor shone so brightly. In spite, therefore, of the fact that he had one American Theatre—the Walnut Street, Philadelphia—still on his hands, he settled down in London. Charles Dickens was delighted with him, and his voice was but one of thousands. In February, 1868, he played *Salem Scudder* in the 'Octoroon' at the Princess's Theatre; and then went on a tour through the English provinces, appearing with great success in Edinburgh, Liverpool, Birmingham, Dublin, Belfast, etc.

His name was long associated with that of the Strand Theatre, in London, where he played *Doctor Pangloss* in the 'Heir-at-Law,' *Ollapod* in the 'Poor Gentleman,' *Robert Tyke* in the 'School of Reform,' and *Babbington Jones* in 'Among the Breakers.' In all of these he achieved distinguished success, his *Doctor Pangloss* being always one of his most favorite characters; but

even this was effaced by his performance of *Toodles*, which was hailed with delight as his most perfect impersonation. It ran for two hundred nights on its first production at the Strand.

On April 17, 1870, he reappeared in New York, and was welcomed with a perfect ovation. He played for forty-two nights, to enormous business, the receipts for the first week alone exceeding $10,000. He then visited Chicago, St. Louis, Louisville, Cincinnati, Pittsburg, Baltimore, Brooklyn, Buffalo, Hartford, New Haven and Philadelphia, playing everywhere to crowded and delighted houses. In Philadelphia, where he had made his earliest triumphs, the welcome given to their old favorite was so enthusiastic, that although his engagement was for fifty nights, the orchestra had to be removed to accommodate the numbers that flocked to see him. The following year he returned to London for a summer season at the Strand Theatre, opening there on July 29, 1871, as *Dr. Pangloss* in the 'Heir at Law,' which ran for one hundred and fifty nights. In December, he returned to America, and during this visit he and the late Edward Sothern played alternately, at two theatres in Philadelphia on the same evening. Mr. Clarke would begin his performance at the Arch Street Theatre with *Dr. Pangloss* and Mr. Sothern at the Walnut Street Theatre with *Lord Dundreary*. Then Mr. Sothern would skip to the Arch and personate *Dundreary* married, while Mr. Clarke, hurrying to the Walnut, would close the evening's programme with *Toodles*. During this time the prices were doubled, but notwithstanding that fact both theatres were crowded nightly for two weeks.

On March 9, 1872, he again appeared at the Strand Theatre and played *Ollapod* in the 'Poor Gentleman' for sixty nights, which he followed with *Paul Pry* for a few weeks in the summer. In 1872 he became manager of what was then the Charing Cross Theatre (now known as Toole's) in London, and opened it with the 'Rivals,' giving his delicious performance of *Bob Acres* for the first time in London. The production was a great success both artistically and financially, and ran for one hundred and twenty-seven nights. It was followed by other of his favorite characters; and he subsequently played with brilliant success throughout the English provinces. On April 4, 1874, he made another London success as *Phineas Pettiphogge* in H. J. Byron's 'Thumbscrew,' at the Holborn Theatre.

In the autumn of 1878, Mr. Clarke became lessee of the Haymarket Theatre, but did not act there himself, until April, 1879, when, in consequence of a failure, he appeared for a short time as *Bob Acres* and *Toodles*. On Sept. 25, he played *Dr. Pangloss* in the 'Heir-at-Law,' and five days later his management concluded. His next appearance in London was again at the Haymarket for a short summer season, commencing Sept. 20, in 1880, as *Dimple* in 'Leap Year,' and *Major Wellington de Boots*. On Oct. 18, this gave place to the 'Rivals,' with Mr. Clarke as *Acres*. He spent part of 1881 in America.

The Strand Theatre, enlarged and redecorated, opened on Nov. 18, 1882, with the 'Heir-at-Law,' and a new burlesque by H. J. Byron and H. B. Farnie called 'Frolique,' in which Mr. Clarke played *Pierre Coquillan*. On Jan. 18, 1883, the 'Comedy of Errors' was revived at this house, with Messrs. Clarke and Paul-

ton as the two *Dromios*,—it was impossible to say which of the two was less like the other. It was not till April, 1885, that he re-appeared again at the same theatre, playing *De Boots*. On July 11, he played a new part, *Cousin Johnny* in a comedy of the same name, by J. F. Nisbet and C. Masham Rae, also at the Strand. "The burden of the piece fell on his shoulders, but even his droll acting failed to galvanize the play into success." Then he appeared in a play by F. C. Burnand, 'Just in Time,' produced at the Avenue Theatre, Nov. 12, 1885, which was also a failure. These meteor-like visits to the London stage have been parts of an orbit of provincial starring, in which he has always been uniformly successful. His last appearance in New York was during the year 1879, when he played *Toodles*, *Major de Boots* and *Dr. Pangloss* for a season at the Fifth Avenue Theatre.

This brings the history of an unusually busy career "up to date"; and with a keen feeling of gratitude for past enjoyment, we look forward to much more to come. Mr. Clarke is still at the zenith of his powers; and though an ample fortune acquired in the exercise of his art may dispose him to "retired leisure," yet for such a performer there are ever new audiences, who clamor for his mirth-compelling presence.

EDW. HAMILTON BELL.

It is no mere assumption of external oddities that can produce two such personalities as *Bob Tyke* and *Toodles*. He has caught the spirit which colors every feature of his former remarkable personation—

which made Fechter describe him when he saw it as an English Frédéric Lemaître, and all the strange unctuous drollery of the latter. The plastic sensibility of mind which enables the player to become another being on the instant is a gift of nature, though it may be improved by study and practice. Mr. Clarke possesses an innate, pliant mobility that enables him momentarily to assume a certain condition of humanity. The elasticity of this faculty, his native humor and power of mimicry,—the mimicry of character and modes of thought and feeling, not of personal peculiarities merely, and of the various forms and degrees of natural drollery—have always given variety to his acting

His forte is the imitation of humanity as seen in every-day life ; and everywhere in this wide range he seems to be at home. He endeavors to be natural by being the character he assumes ; and the secret of his great success we believe to be that he experiences for the time the emotions, comic or otherwise, which he depicts, and is for the moment the person he represents. It has always seemed to us that in forming his personations he unfolded from the germ of the dramatist's idea a visible shape, clothed in the external attributes of some person who may have crossed his path, and whose image is recalled by some analogy of nature. We are confirmed in this notion by knowing that in creating such a real and original person as *De Boots* he did so by mimicking a real person whose manner accorded with the characteristics of the dramatist's sketch ; and some of the best bits in 'Toodles' we know to have been taken from living subjects. His by-play in both these performances surpasses that of any comedian we have ever seen. He fills up the

pauses of the dialogue by a number of trivial and unimportant actions, performed with so much ease and address that they seem habitual and unconsciously done, always tending to preserve the illusion of the scene or develop minor traits of character, and never appearing forced. Clarke rivets attention by what he does; he does not invite notice to what he is about; there is no note of preparation sounded, no intimation given to watch his movements, nor are they exaggerated for effect at a distance.

WILLIAM STUART, in *Lippincott's Magazine*, November, 1881.

The purpose of the revival is obviously to furnish Mr. John S. Clarke, the American comedian, with a new part of strongly marked character. He plays *Dr. Pangloss*, and takes a view of that model tutor which is perfectly consistent with the text, and which affords occasion for the display of the broadest humor. According to Mr. Clarke, *Pangloss* is not a dry pedant, but a genial swindler with pedantic embellishments, who has the greatest difficulty in concealing the delight afforded by the triumphant success of his own dishonesty. An urbane man, too! He chuckles inwardly at the cacology of his noble patron, but he corrects his mistakes with the utmost delicacy, rather suggesting than demanding an amendment, the embodied spirit of insinuation. On one occasion only is he thoroughly grave, and that is when he is compelled by Dick Dowlas to dance in the streets, and he sees in that dance the ruin of his prospects. The legs partially move, but the face is sad.

The *Times*, London, Feb. 7, 1870.

But of the twin Clarke—J. S.,—what is to be said? Such an emollient face, surely such rich enjoyment and fun, is seldom seen. The rapidity with which the changes are made, the return from boisterous laughter to instant gravity,—in this he is unique. A favorite device of his is known to us all; a sort of chuckling is going on, the unctuous face is rippling in waves of enjoyment, he is getting familiar, when some remark is made,—an allusion to a wife of whom he is in awe, when, in a second, a livid terror fills his face. His eyes roll, his lips take an O shape, as if anxious to form words but cannot, his cheeks become red and distended, he seems hot with alarm. This change the play-goer will recall. His *Major de Boots* is full of such; and there is nothing more diverting on the stage than the gravity of his face and tones, as he reads, or attempts to read, the letter at the end of the piece.

PERCY FITZGERALD: The 'World behind the Scenes,' *pp.* 118–9.

On Thursday, June 27, 1872, at the Strand, he performed the part of *Paul Pry* in Poole's well-known comedy. During the several seasons Mr. Clarke has played in London he has taken up, one after the other, most of the leading characters of broad comedy. His representations, depending largely upon facial play, have a generic likeness, and it is rather by aid of such accessories as costume than by means of any special portrayal of character that the spectator distinguishes one from the other. The impersonation of *Paul Pry*, the hero of Poole's well-known comedy, has much in common with his *Dr. Ollapod* and *Dr. Pangloss.* In absolute extravagance of drollery Mr.

Clarke approaches nearer Liston perhaps than any subsequent interpreter of the character first named.

CHAS. EYRE PASCOE: The 'Dramatic List.'—J. S. Clarke.

Of his best known impersonations I can only say a few words in closing this sketch. His *De Boots* is one of the most delightful characterizations of a good-humored poltroon, whose soldierly swagger is at odds with his bantam-like person, feeble voice and satisfied pomp of manner. His *Young Gosling* is a rare piece of drollery, illustrating various stages of inebriety and a rich display of pusillanimity in carrying out the duel which he has provoked. His *Babbington Jones* is a skilful delineation of the character of a groom whose comical mishaps he accompanies with a capital change of feature and gesture. His *Toodles* is a masterly representation of a drunken countryman who tries to maintain his self-respect under the most discouraging and ridiculous surroundings. His *Dr. Pangloss* is a study true to nature and a work of art which has placed it on the same high plane as the efforts of the renowned comedians of the past in this character. His *Dr. Ollapod* and *Bob Acres* are distinguished for the same high order of acting, and that is the highest possible praise that could be given them

Brooklyn Eagle, Nov. 15, 1885.

Mr. Clarke's power as a comedian chiefly lies, and is shown to the best advantage, in characters which he has solely created. Take, for example, his rendition of *Salem Scudder*, *Bob Tyke*, *Waddilove and De Boots*, parts which, for his fame's sake and the public's enter-

tainment, he plays less frequently than he should. The first of these impersonations is a pure creation of his genius,—and the same remark will apply equally well to the last two,—full of the finest conceptions, and played with such exquisite judgment and meaning as to place him among the first of living players. In that scene in the 'Octoroon' where he has the struggle for life with the brutal overseer, whose knife he has wrenched from his hand, and whom he is pressing to the earth with his knee fixed on his breast, he rises above the ruffian the very picture of retributive justice. At first it seems right that he should kill the murderous scoundrel, and he tells him in those low, thrilling tones that he feels tempted to do it. "Then why don't you?" asks the surly woman-whipper. Nothing can be finer, fuller of dignity and repressed power, than *Salem Scudder's* reply, which is so spoken as to seem the protest of all mankind against the Devil's code of law, the bowie-knife and pistol: "Because," he slowly, almost regretfully, says—"because the spirit of civilization within me won't let me do it." And as he says it, the spectator can see that "the spirit of civilization" is having a tough struggle with that wandering Yankee for the slave-driver's blood; but civilization conquers, and he removes his knee, letting the miscreant go. The whole scene is exquisitely rendered, and is worthy of the highest commendation. As *Bob Tyke*, another eccentric character, not strictly belonging to comedy, he displays throughout the same rarely beautiful traits of restrained power. But we are afraid that Mr. Clarke considers these characters beneath his care, and they are falling out of his *répertoire*; yet

they are, as he plays them, portraits strong as a Titian drew.

Atlantic Monthly, June, 1867.

John S. Clarke is the heir in genius of Harry Woodward and John Emery, and more versatile and brilliant than either.

WILLIAM WINTER: The 'Jeffersons,' *p.* 226.

MR. AND MRS. FLORENCE.

Lustrous beacons of the stage
In a fickle, feverish age ;
Striving on with honest heart
For the claims and aims of Art

Twin stars — circling year by year —
Radiant o'er a hemisphere ;
Models of the good and pure ;
May your influence long endure.

THOMAS E. GARRETT.



W. J. FLORENCE.

Mail

MR. AND MRS. FLORENCE.

William Jermyn Florence, like so many of the stars of his profession, began to twinkle on the amateur stage. Born in Albany, N. Y., on July 26, 1831, he drifted to New York before he was fifteen years of age ; and while his days were spent in honest, prosaic toil for daily bread, his nights were devoted to tragedy, comedy, scene individable, and poem unlimited under the auspices of the Murdoch Dramatic Association of that city. He soon found his way upon the regular boards, and made his maiden bow to the public as *Peter* in the ' Stranger ' at the theatre at Richmond, Va., on December 6, 1849. In the spring of the following year he became a member of the company at Niblo's Garden, under the management of Brougham and Chippendale, and as *Hallagon*, a small part in a drama by Brougham called ' Home,' first appeared as a professional actor in New York, May 13, 1850. At this house he was associated during the season with Mary Taylor, Mrs. Vernon, Mrs. John Sefton, Fanny Wallack, Charlotte Cushman, Burton, Brougham and Placide. When Mr. Brougham opened the Lyceum (afterward Wallack's Theatre, and the Broadway Theatre) on the corner of Broadway and Broome Street, New York, on December 23, 1850, Mr. Florence appeared in an after-piece of absurdity, called the

'Light Guard, or Woman's Rights'; and he made his first decided hit at this establishment on April 22, 1851, in the 'Row at the Lyceum,' where he appeared as a red-shirted fire-laddie of that period, and at once asserted himself as more than a mere utility man or second walking gentleman, and fit for better things than the commonplace parts that had hitherto been assigned to him. During the season following he was at the Broadway Theatre, New York (the original of that name, between Anthony, since Worth Street, and Pearl Street), opening on Aug. 30, 1852, as *Lord Tinsel* to the *Julia* of Julia Dean and the *Master Walter* of F. B. Conway, later supporting Forrest, Mr. and Mrs. Barney Williams and Mrs. Mowatt. On January 1, 1853, he married Miss Malvina Pray, with whom he has since been so pleasantly and so profitably associated during a long and honorable dramatic career.

Mr. and Mrs. Florence as the Irish Boy and Yankee Girl were first discovered in the dramatic horizon as a double star at the National Theatre, Chatham Street, New York, on June 13, 1853, where they met at once with the great success which followed them on their extensive tour throughout the United States. In 1856 they first appeared at Drury Lane, when Mrs. Florence, as a specimen of American Help, in the 'Yankee Housekeeper,' a new figure on the English stage, amused and entertained London audiences for a season of fifty nights. Mr. Florence's first marked success in a more serious part was his *Bob Brierly* in the 'Ticket of Leave Man' produced originally in America at the Winter Garden, New York, Nov. 30, 1863, Mrs. Florence playing *Emily*

St. Evremonde. The drama, admirably presented in all its parts, created a sensation almost without precedent in the United States, and ran for an hundred and twenty-five successive nights in New York, and for thousands of nights elsewhere throughout the country. On Aug. 5, 1867, at the theatre on the corner of Broadway and Broome Street, Mr. Florence produced Robertson's 'Caste'—first time in America—an almost perfect play perfectly played. Mr. Florence as *George D'Alroy* was the ideal, honest, modest, manly soldier, who combined simple faith with Norman blood, and whose kind heart adorned his coronet; while Mrs. Florence, with a delightful and conspicuous lack of that repose of manner which stamps the caste of Vere de Vere, was worth, as *Polly Eccles*, several hundred coats-of-arms.

'Caste' was followed on September 28, 1868, and at the same house, by 'No Thoroughfare,' when Mr. Florence introduced *Obenreizer* to the American stage, in his hands a very clever piece of character acting, entirely unlike *D'Alroy*, *Brierly*, *Captain Cuttle*, *Mose*, or the *Irish Emigrant*, by which he had hitherto been so well known. Mrs. Florence did not appear in this drama.

In 1875 Mr. Florence created *Bardwell Slote* in Mr. B. E. Woolf's 'Mighty Dollar,' an original character, fresh, quaint, and entirely possible in real life, who is destined to walk down to posterity arm in arm with *Rip Van Winkle*, *Joe Bunker*, *Solon Shingle*, *Davy Crocket*, and *Colonel Sellers*, the typical stage American of the Nineteenth Century, Mr. Florence's most enduring character, by a large majority. As *Mrs. General Gilflory* in the 'Mighty Dollar,' Mrs. Florence was a fit mate for the m. o. o. ("man of

honor") with whom she was associated; not destined to live so long, perhaps, as the member from the Cohosh district, but quite as delightful in her way. In September, 1883, Mr. Florence produced Geo. H. Jessop's 'Our Govenor,' under the title of 'Facts,' at the Walnut Street Theatre in Philadelphia. Its name was changed the following season.

Mr. Florence has been seen in many characters, and has been associated with—supporting or supported by—some of the most prominent members of his profession on both sides the Atlantic. His name has appeared in bills by the side of Barrett, McCullough, Raymond, Burton, Brougham and Toole. He has played *Trip* to the *Lady Teazle* of Mrs. Catherine Sinclair (Forrest), *Captain Cuttle* to the *Mr. Dombey* of Henry Irving, *Richmond* and *Laertes* with the elder Booth, *Titus* and *Lucullus* with Edwin Forrest, and at the Academy of Music, New York, October 12, 1877, for the benefit of Edwin Adams, he played *Iago* to the *Othello* of E. A. Sothern, the *Desdemona* of Lotta, and the *Emilia* of Mrs. John Drew.

Mrs. Florence, a daughter of Samuel Pray, who lost his life by fire at the old Broadway Theatre, New York, was known as Miss Mavina, a dancer at the Vauxhall Garden, Bowery, and at Burton's and Wallack's Theatres, New York. She rarely appeared in speaking parts until she became Mrs. Florence, in 1853, although she is remembered as playing *Little Pickle* in the 'Adopted Child,' at Pelby's National Theatre, Boston. The story of her career since her marriage has been told with that of her husband in the preceding pages.

LAURENCE HUTTON.

The curtain rose to a crowded house on a scene at rehearsal, after the manner of Sheridan's 'Critic'; the actors and actresses, in their ordinary street dresses, looking in every respect like the not more than ordinary men and women they really were, when paint and tinsel, sock and buskin, were discarded, dropping in casually like other ordinary mortals on business bent, to read and discuss Carlyle's new and wonderful production.

It was the green-room proper of a theatre, with all the green-room accessories and surroundings, the scenes and incidents, concords and discords of a green-room gathering; and was as heartily enjoyed by the Lyceum audience as would one of Wallack's famous Saturday night houses of the present, enjoy being invited to visit *en masse* that unknown and mysterious land contained behind the scenes, and to assist at Mr. Boucicault's reading of the 'Shaughraun' to the assembled company for the first time.

Mr. Dunn as *Mr. Dunn*, Tom the Call Boy as *Tom*, and Mrs. Vernon as *Mrs. Vernon*, were very natural of course and very funny. As it was Tom's first appearance before the curtain in any character, he was not a little excited, and his very evident consciousness was as amusing and refreshing as was the self-possession of the rest of the *dramatis personæ*.

The audience was thoroughly interested and amused at the realism of the performance, when, "Enter Mrs. B.," the scene changes, and the 'Row at the Lyceum' begins. While she greets her friends, looks over her part, objects to her business, and lays her claims to something more in her line, a stout, middle-aged gentleman, seated in the middle of the pit, clothed in

a Quakerish garb, who had hitherto quietly listened and laughed with the rest, rises suddenly in his place, with umbrella clasped firmly in both hands, and held up on a line with his nose, to the astonishment of the house, calmly and sedately addresses the stage and the house, in words to this effect: "That woman looks for all the world like Clementina! Her voice is very like—the form the same." And then, with emphasis: "It is! it is! my wife!" at the same time leaving his seat in great excitement, he rushes toward the foot-lights, and cries wildly and loudly, "Come off that stage, thou miserable woman!"

The utmost confusion quickly reigned in the theatre. The audience, at first amused at the interruption, seeing that the Quaker gentleman was in earnest, soon took sides for or against him, and saluted him with all sorts of encouraging and discouraging cries as he fought his way toward the orchestra. "Who is he?" "Who is she?" "Shame! shame!" "Put him out!" "Go it, Broadbrim!" "Sit down!" "Police!" Hootings, hissings, cat-calls, making the scene as tumultuous as can be well imagined. The boys in the gallery, delighted at the "Row," in which, from their distance, they could only participate vocally,—

> Hailed him from out their youthful lore,
> With scraps of a slangy *repertoire:*
> "How are you, White Hat?" "Put her through!"
> "Your head's level!" and "Bully for you!"
> Called him "Daddy!"—begged he'd disclose
> The name of the tailor who made his clothes,—

and did all that boys in a gallery could do, to worse confound the confusion.

Up in the third tier, in a corner near the stage, in

prominent position, visible to all, was one particularly gallery and "gallus" boy,—a fireman, red-shirted, soap-locked, with tilted tile, a pure specimen of the now obsolete b'hoy,—*Mose* himself. He added greatly to the excitement of the scene, by the loud and personal interest he seemed to take in the proceedings, and promised, in a vernacular now happily almost as obsolete as is the *genus* itself, to give the indignant husband a sound lamming if he ventured to lay a hand on that young 'oman; volunteering, if the indignant husband would wait for him, to go down and do it then and there; proceeding then and there to go down and do it!

At this stage of the proceedings, the dramatic performances of 'Green-Room Secrets' were entirely stopped. The artists were utterly unable to proceed on account of the uproar in front. The ladies were frightened; the gentlemen, addressing the house, and striving vainly to restore order, were quite powerless to proceed; while *Mrs. B*——, the innocent cause of all the trouble, evidently preparing for flight, was agitated and very nervous. All this time the irate husband was struggling to reach his wife, and fighting his way toward her. He finally climbed over the orchestra, the red-shirted defender of the young 'oman close behind him, when both were collared by a policeman or two, dragged upon the stage, made to face the house, the regulation stage semicircle was formed behind the footlights, and the epilogue was spoken,—the audience beginning to recognize in the efficient policemen, the supes of the establishment; in the fire-laddie of the soap-locks and tilted tile, Mr. W. J. Florence, a member of the company; in the indig-

nant husband, Mr. Brougham himself; in the recovered wife, Mrs. Brougham; and to realize that the 'Row at the Lyceum' was a premeditated and magnificent "sell."

We may mention here in passing, that this peculiar part of the "rough," played by Mr. Florence, was his first decided success on the New York boards. It brought him much notoriety and applause, and encouraged his adoption of the eccentric comedy and sensational parts he has made his *forte*, and in which he is so well known at present. Previous to this hit, we find him doing a general utility business, as second or third walking gentleman, chiefly in Brooklyn and the provinces,—playing such parts as *Witherton* in 'Paul Pry,' *Valare* in the 'Secret,' *Langford* in 'My Precious Betsey,' *Brockett* in the 'King and the Mimic,' *Mr. Wickfield* in 'David Copperfield,' *Brandt* in the 'Soldier's Return,' *Captain Cannon* in the 'Dead Shot,' *Frampton* in the 'Nabob for an Hour,' and in other parts of similar kind.

LAURENCE HUTTON: 'Plays and Players,' *chap.* 8.

The *Hon. Bardwell Slote*, acted by Mr. Florence, is a personage not unlike, in his effect, certain of the caricatures delineated by Dickens. He is portly, grizzled, slightly bald, red nosed, bright-eyed, addicted to black satin waistcoats and big bosom pins, voluble, shrewd, grasping, unprincipled, saturated with greed and with an odd kind of smirking humor, and very absurd: and he is presented as a politician, resident in Washington, and engaged in trying to feather his nest by taking bribes for lobbying railway bills through Congress. This individual, as he is person-

ated by Mr. Florence, is, assuredly, a valuable addition to the comical figures of the stage. Mr. Florence's temperament is of the kind that tends to drollery, and he has entered with great vigor and zest into this conception. The performance is toned with burlesque, but this tone is necessary in dealing with a caricature. Mr. Florence exhibits artistic instinct in making *Slote* grotesque and amusing, without making him unsympathetic and contemptible. The habit of indulging in monologues—after the manner of Unsworth, the negro minstrel, in those clever stump speeches which will be heard no more—and the habit of preluding phrases by announcing their initials (as, k. k.—the cruel cuss, and g. u.—gone up), are superficial peculiarities, occasionally laughable. The deeper merit is identification of the actor with the character, and the discreet preservation of balance betwixt nature and extravagance.

WILLIAM WINTER, in the *New York Tribune*, Sept. 22, 1875.

Mrs. Florence was formerly popular as a *danseuse* (to which fact is doubtless owing the gracefulness of carriage so admired in her), and subsequently gained great applause by her impersonation of the 'Yankee Girl.' She shared the honors with her husband in their engagements, and her latest effort combined to secure the great popularity of the 'Mighty Dollar.' Mrs. Florence is indeed inimitable as *Mrs. General Gilflory*. Her impersonation of the good-natured widow, with a weakness for the French language, is replete with vivacity, while utterly devoid of coarseness. It is, in fact, the work of a consummate comedienne. . . .

Her acting as *Emily St. Evremonde* in the 'Ticket of Leave Man' is as good in its way as is *Mrs. Gilflory*. In both cases it stamps her traits as unique as they are admirable.

The *New York Graphic*, Sept. 21, 1877.

When the stage made its next snatch for another typical American it grasped a full-fledged member of the lower house engaged in feathering his own nest. *Judge Bardwell Slote* is M. C. for the Cohosh district. He appears in a play called the 'Mighty Dollar,' by Mr. B. E. Woolf. He is a good-natured, well-meaning, half-educated politician, with little knowledge and no principles. He is a fair specimen of those who take the stump before election, only to roll logs after it. The part is played by Mr. W. J. Florence with a richness of humorous caricature which almost redeems the inherent vulgarity of the character. The performance is pitched in a burlesque key, and in quiet burlesque informed with drollery Mr. Florence is admirable. He acts the character with great zest, and in marvellous "make-up." The smirking, grasping, greedy, shrewd and yet simple politician has been endowed by the author of the play with certain superficial characteristics of which the actor makes the most.

BRANDER MATTHEWS, in *Scribner's Monthly*, July, 1879.

Mr. Florence's representation of the part is, indeed, wonderfully clever and amusing. His caricature in no respect oversteps the modesty of nature. It is a caricature, and is intended to be one, but it is not one of those violent and fantastic absurdities with which we are sometimes presented under like circumstances. It

is a careful study, founded throughout on fact and observation, and only a little overcolored to suit the dramatic medium in which it is presented. In any case it went home to the audience directly—" p. d. q.," as *Judge Slote* himself puts it, " pretty d—— quick ! " A sympathy with American character, a delight in American eccentricities and forms of expression, has been rapidly growing among the English public of late, and Mr. Florence is certainly one of the ablest exponents of American human nature our stage has as yet seen.

The *Figaro*, London, Sept. 2, 1880.

Mr. Florence's presentation of the *Hon. Bardwell Slote* is a singularly fine piece of character acting. It develops in a kind of extravagance in parts, where, for instance, a pretence is made to sing, and it is marred by the too frequent repetition of a specie of conversational trick, which in itself is not unamusing, but which grows tedious when too frequently employed. Making allowance for these defects, it is a very ripe and effective piece of acting, and the character presented, with its ineffable self-content and its cheery exposition of selfishness it is too ingenuous to strive to hide, is quite masterly. Though American as regards its surroundings, and certain manifestations, the character is true and recognizable. No difficulty whatever is experienced in estimating its truthfulness or appreciating its niceties. Mr. Florence is entitled to the honor of supplying the stage with a creation.

The *Athenæum*, London, Sept. 4, 1880.

As for *Mrs. General Gilflory* as represented by Mrs.

W. J. Florence, she is simply superb. She is *impayable* or *ongpayable* as she herself would say in her inimitable atrocious French. . . . *Mrs. General Gilflory* is not an original character. She is a combination of Mrs. Ramsbottom, Mrs. Malaprop and the Begum in 'Pendennis'; but her wit, her humor, her good nature and her wonderful French are all Mrs. Florence's own. I have seldom seen a part so naturally and so unaffectedly acted; and, looking at the doubly farcical elements in the character, it is surprising to mark how very rarely the fun of *Mrs. General Gilflory* is strained to caricature.

GEORGE AUGUSTUS SALA, in the *Illustrated London News*, Sept. 4, 1880.

The American actor showed that he was thoroughly skilful, and had a strong sense of humor, by his performance of *Bardwell Slote* in a bad play, and perhaps shows it still more by his performance of *Captain Cuttle* in an even worse play. His rendering of pathos misses the true ring, but avoids condemnation. In the general interpretation of the character he has to meet the same kind of difficulties which beset the illustrator of a familiar book, and he gets over these difficulties, as well as those which arise from his being an American, with much success. Both in *Bardwell Slote* and in *Captain Cuttle* Mr. Florence has displayed, besides the merits which belong to a clever and thoroughly practised actor, that indefinable quality by which a player is enabled to create at once a sympathetic feeling between himself and his audience.

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK, in the *Saturday Review*, Nov. 27, 1880.



MRS. W. J. FLORENCE.

Not for loan

Although new to a metropolitan audience Mr. Florence's *Captain Cuttle* has been seen in this country before. In 1862 I believe he played the part in Manchester, on which occasion the cast included Mr. Henry Irving as *Dombey*, while Mr. Florence's impersonation of the old captain won warm recognition from Mr. Dickens himself, who declared that it thoroughly realized his conception of the character. And it is easy to understand that such was the case, for a more thoroughly breezy, natural and lifelike presentation of the old man than Mr. Florence's, it would be difficult to conceive. . . . Mr. Florence's acting is as good as his inimitable make-up, and the personation is a most finished one. He is irresistibly humorous and delightfully in earnest when he wants to present his teaspoons to *Mr. Dombey;* and the way in which he tacks to the door with *Florence Dombey* in his arms, as if under a heavy press of sail, was a capital piece of "business." There was pathos too in the old man's sorrow for *Walter's* supposed death, and his glee at the good news was very amusing to witness.

H. SAVILE CLARKE, in the *Examiner*, London, Dec. 4, 1880.

Mr. Florence acted last night with extraordinary spirit and deep feeling. His identification with *Bob Brierly* is complete in every point, and is consistently sustained from beginning to end. The education of the old school actor was seen again with delight in the honest, unaffected and only artistically curbed emotion that the actor allowed to suffuse his work. Mr. Florence is one of the actors who have not caught the fever of modern cynicism, and are not

ashamed to be in earnest. His treatment of the love scene was full of tenderness and a certain rough grace that easily won the hearts of his hearers. The spirit of the impersonation is uncommonly sweet and gentle, and its artistic treatment has the ease of second nature.

WILLIAM WINTER, in the *New York Tribune*, Oct. 24, 1882.

Mr. Florence is a genuine actor, and in his way a most finished artist. He has the gift of impersonation —a quality scarcely looked for upon the modern stage —to a most remarkable degree, being perhaps without a rival in the art of self-effacement. There is certainly no other actor of prominence in this country capable of presenting three characters so completely distinct as those of *Obenreizer*, *Bardwell Slote*, and *Captain Cuttle*, not to speak of other personages in his theatrical repertory. These impersonations are noteworthy not only for the extraordinary versatility indicated by them, but for the perfection of their artistic finish. Nobody could reasonably wish for portraits more vivid, lifelike, or consistent in detail. And this effect is wrought by sheer power of simulation, as there is scarcely anywhere a trace of the individual personality of the actor himself. Such a performance has real artistic value, and is of so rare a kind nowadays that it ought not to be neglected.

J. RANKEN TOWSE, in the *Evening Post*, New York, September 22, 1885.

A comedian of the most genial, mirthful, kindly nature, he has powers to depict the most pronounced

types of melodramatic character with a vital force, an intense energy, that would seem incredible to one who had seen his *Captain Cuttle* and had never seen his *Jules Obenreizer*. To sum him up in a word, Mr. Florence is an actor—and how few actors we have to-day! We have come to be content with merely special players. We mean those actors who play one part well, but can never submerge that character or their own individuality in any other part. One might number on his fingers all the players now before the public who might do well any line of character for which they could be cast. They are mostly veterans, men who have come up the disciplinary way of varied experience and much study. The younger actors have neither the opportunity nor the incentive of their predecessors. They mount quickly to their little prominence, reign their brief day, and are shoved aside to make way for other ephemerals. But the actors of the school from which Mr. Florence came leave their impress on their times so firmly that other generations come to know of them and something like real fame attends their names. Mr. Florence will be a memory long after he has ceased to play at making character on the stage. This capital actor is no less entertaining in private life than on the stage. He is a remarkably well-informed man. A great observer, he has gathered from all lands some curious knowledge, knows something of all peoples, and perhaps has as extensive acquaintance as any man living with notable persons throughout the world. His memory for scenes, incidents, and facts located at any period within the past thirty years is extraordinary. In conversation with him one can hardly mention the

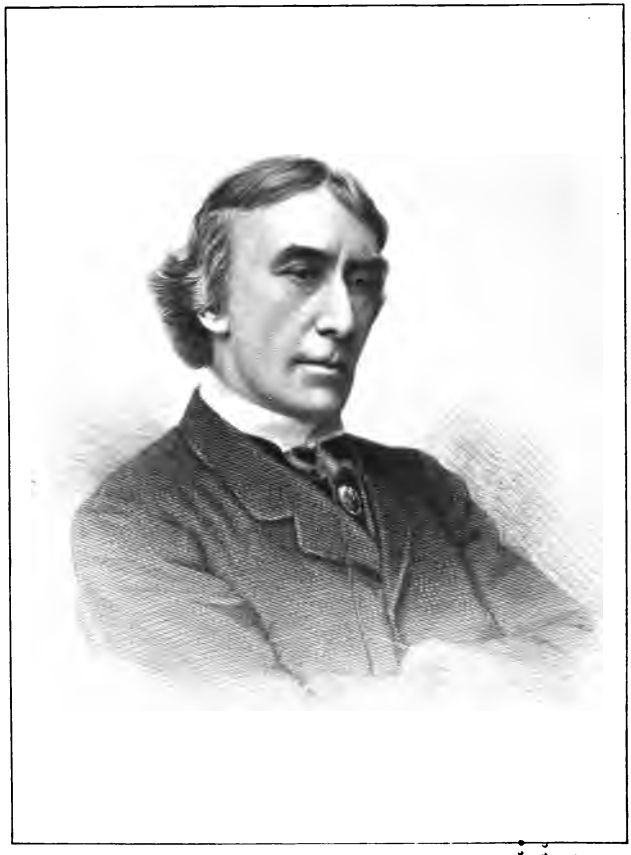
name of place or person that does not recall to Mr. Florence some interesting fact or circumstances related thereto, which he proceeds to narrate delightfully. And as a *raconteur* he has few superiors, his stories usually being of a kind to illustrate pointedly some part of the general conversation, which he manages shall flow on again without that dead calm which so commonly falls after a clever story. It is a profit to pass an hour or two in his company whenever there is opportunity, as it is a delight to witness his artistic work in an evening.

The *Chicago Inter-Ocean*, March 14, 1886.

MR. HENRY IRVING.

His life has made this iron age
  More grand and fair in story;
Illumed our Shakspere's sacred page
  With new and deathless glory;
Refreshed the love of noble fame
  In hearts all sadly faring,
And lit anew the dying flame
  Of genius and of daring.

WILLIAM WINTER.



HENRY IRVING.

Non-circulating

MR. HENRY IRVING.

John Henry Brodribb, or, as he is now known, Henry Irving, the most accomplished theatrical manager and one of the most interesting and intellectual actors of the day, was born in England, at Keinton, near Glastonbury, Feb. 6, 1838. His father and mother were both descended from old Cornish families, held in high repute in the neighborhood of St. Ives, and it was in Cornwall that he passed the days of his early boyhood. At the age of eleven years he was put to school in George Yard, Lombard Street, London, under the tuition of Dr. Pinches, and tradition says that he soon won the admiration of his school-fellows by his skill in recitation. However this may be, it is certain that he was stricken early with the stage fever; for although upon leaving school he was placed in a merchant's office, he devoted all his spare time to the study of theatrical literature, saving his scanty pocket money to buy the needful books, and to pay for lessons in elocution from an actor in the company of Sadler's Wells Theatre. This led to his introduction to Samuel Phelps, the illustrious manager of that famous little house, who must have discerned evident signs of talent in the youth, inasmuch as he offered him a small engagement. This must have been a tempting offer to young Irving, but he had the good sense to decline it, rightly judging that

preliminary practice in the provinces was the surest road to future metropolitan success. Thus it happened that he made his first public appearance as the *Duke of Orleans* in 'Richelieu,' in Sunderland, in the North of England, in September, 1856. In the following year he was engaged at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, where he remained for two years and a half, acting in company with Charlotte Cushman, Helen Faucit, Charles James Mathews, Benjamin Webster, Frederick Robson and other players whose names are high on the roll of dramatic fame. During this period he appeared in more than three hundred parts, of every imaginable variety, and doubtless laid the foundation of that complete mastery of stage artifice which in later days proved of such inestimable value to him. Through the influence of the well-known comedian John L. Toole, with whom he has ever since maintained a close, almost romantic friendship, he procured a three years' engagement at the Princess's Theatre, in London, and fame and fortune seemed almost within his grasp. But disappointment awaited him. He was awarded an insignificant part in an adaptation of Feuillet's 'Romance of a Poor Young Man,' and cancelling his agreement, retired once again to the provinces. He went first to Glasgow, but soon removed to Manchester, where he acted for nearly five years, at the end of which time he had acquired sufficient confidence in his powers to essay *Hamlet*. In the following year, 1866, he was engaged by Dion Boucicault, and played *Rawdon Scudamore* in that prolific writer's 'Hunted Down,' acquitting himself so well that he was selected to play leading characters in the St. James's Theatre, London.

It was in October, 1866, that the actor made his second venture on the London boards, enacting *Doricourt* in the 'Belle's Stratagem,' a performance which met with commendation. From this he reverted to *Rawdon Scudamore*, and for some time was closely associated with various types of stage villains, ranging from *Joseph Surface* to *Robert Macaire* and even *Bill Sikes*. His professional labors, however, were by no means confined to this class of characters, for he appeared successfully as *Petruchio*, *Charles Marlow*, *Harry Dornton*, *De Neuville* (in 'Plot and Passion'), and, especially, as *Dr. Chevenix* in 'Uncle Dick's Darling.' He made a hit as *Jeremy Diddler*, and was recognized generally as an eccentric comedian of great versatility, keen perception and finished skill. It was as *Digby Grant*, however, in Albery's 'Two Roses,' produced in the London Vaudeville Theatre in 1870, that he made his first great hit, and established his position as one of the leading actors of the day. The forcefulness, truth and cynical humor of this performance were extraordinary, and the actor and the play became the talk of the town. After a long and triumphant season he was tendered a benefit performance, and then for the first time recited the 'Dream of Eugene Aram,' startling everybody by the vividness and power of his interpretation, and the boldness and novelty of the methods employed. Immediately after this triumph he went to the Lyceum Theatre, then under the direction of Mr. Bateman, and it was there in November, 1871, that he made his appearance as *Mathias*, in the 'Bells,' achieving a success which placed him in the very front rank of his profession. Critical opinion differed greatly as to

the artistic merit of the assumption, but there was never any room for doubt touching its thrilling effect upon the audiences which filled the theatre for months. The extraordinary subtlety and minute perfection of detail with which he portrayed the growing horrors of a guilty conscience racked by ever-increasing apprehension of detection and punishment, culminating in the delirium of the dream scene, and ending in a simulated death of most ghastly realism, more than atoned for the mannerisms of speech and gesture, which had always been peculiar to the actor, but which had never seemed so prominent and aggressive. But Mr. Irving had more surprises in store. In 1872 the play of 'Charles I.' was produced, and in this again Mr. Irving scored a triumph, not so great as the first, perhaps, but no less remarkable in view of the versatility displayed. Whereas in the part of *Mathias* he had wrought the profoundest impression by his portrayal of the frenzies of despairing guilt, he now compelled admiration by the dignity and mournful tenderness with which he played the luckless *King*. The old faults were manifest, but in a less painful degree, and the artistic repose and pathos of the impersonation awakened profound admiration. In April, 1873, Mr. Irving added *Eugene Aram* to his theatrical portrait gallery, and again the actor was successful, but his success in this was less astonishing, as the character, although widely different from that of *Mathias*, was manifestly easily within the resources of the actor who had created the latter part.

In 1873, Mr. Irving made the bold experiment of playing *Richelieu*, and the storm of criticism raged once more. That the performance was exceedingly



HENRY IRVING
As Mathias in "The Bells."

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clever, elaborated with rare skill and keen intellectual insight, was generally conceded, but the lack of true emotional power in the most trying scenes was clearly shown, especially when the inevitable comparison was made with the performances of men like Macready and Phelps. The play ran for more than one hundred nights, but the representation cannot be classed among Mr. Irving's triumphs. The next Lyceum play was 'Philip,' and then in the autumn of 1874 Mr. Irving took the boldest step of his career and played *Hamlet*. By this time the critics had resolved themselves into two bodies. To the one party everything done by Mr. Irving was the work of supreme genius—to the other his claims to eminence in tragedy seemed preposterous. A furious battle was waged in the public prints over his *Dane*, and the bitterness of the disputants, as in the case of Fechter, only tended to increase public interest in the performance. The popular success was never in doubt. From the first the theatre was crowded, and the piece ran for two hundred nights, a statement which proves conclusively the fascination which the performance had for the ordinary theatre-goer, while the novelty and ingenuity of it had potent charms for the more critical observers. There is not room within the limits of the present article for anything like a minute or critical analysis of the interpretation. The most obvious defects in it we are due to the absence of real tragic power and confirmed vices of elocution. In the great scenes of the play—in the meeting with the *Ghost*, in the closet scene with the *Queen*, in the challenge to *Laertes*, and in the death scene—there was not a gleam of tragic fire; and it is scarcely too much to say that the tragic

side of *Hamlet's* character received no representation at all. The action was spirited, picturesque, dramatic, and incessant, and would have been most eloquent and impressive to an audience of the deaf and dumb; but in the delivery of the lines there was no thrill of passionate emotion. In other words, the actor was incapable of executing the design which his intellect had elaborated. In the quieter conversational passages of the play he was entirely successful. Here his fertility in all expedients of gesture and expression stood him in good stead. His scenes with *Horatio* and *Marcellus*, with *Rosencrantz* and *Guildenstern*, with *Polonius*, and with the *Players*, were almost wholly admirable, and were acted with a naturalness and simplicity which made his extravagances at other times all the more noticeable. His treatment of the scene with the *Grave-diggers* was perfect, the spirit being one of gentle and philosophic melancholy, lightened by a tinge of amusement. The impression gained from the impersonation as a whole was one of elaborate study, rather than subtlety. Most careful thought had been expended, evidently, upon the possible significance of lines and words, and upon the invention of illustrative business. Many examples might be quoted to show the extraordinary care which the English actor bestowed upon what less conscientious men would call insignificant details. Even so hackneyed a play as 'Hamlet' under his management was transformed into something like a novelty.*

In 'Macbeth,' which was Mr. Irving's next venture in Shaksperean tragedy, he was even less successful,

* Parts of this article were published in the *Century Magazine* of March, 1884.—J. R. T.

for his interpretation of that character was opposed to nearly all those conceptions made familiar to the English public by generations of eminent tragedians. The criticisms upon this performance however did not prevent him from playing *Othello* in 1876, but his failure in this tremendous part was emphatic, and he abandoned Shaksperean tragedy for a while to act in Tennyson's 'Queen Mary,' in which he found *Philip II.* a part much more congenial to his style and temperament than that of the *Moor*. In 1877 he once more turned his attention to Shakspere, producing 'Richard III.,' and playing the true version, not Cibber's. His *Gloster* was remarkable for finesse and intellectual force. The subtle deviltry of it, and a certain princeliness which was never wanting, were admirable, and elicited much critical praise, but once again the actor proved wanting when he came to deal with the tragic episodes at the end of the play. His next production was that of the 'Lyons Mail,' in which he enacted the dual characters of *Lesurques* and *Dubosc* with striking effect, and then he revived Delavigne's play of 'Louis XI.,' in which he achieved one of the most notable and thorough artistic triumphs of his remarkable career. A more brilliant example of elaborate and harmonious mechanism had rarely if ever been witnessed upon the stage. The personal appearance of the actor as the decrepit old monarch was a triumph of the dresser's art as well as of artistic imagination. The deathly pallor of the face, with its sinister lines; the savage mouth, with its one or two wolfish fangs; the hollow cheeks, surmounted by the gleaming eyes, whose natural size and brilliancy had been increased by every known trick of shading; the

fragile body on the bent and trembling legs—presented a picture of horrible fascination. It was as if a corpse, already touched by the corruption of the tomb, had been for one brief hour galvanized into life. The conception was exaggerated to the verge of grotesqueness, but the thrilling effect of it was indisputable; and, after all, a little exaggeration in the depiction of a character bearing few traces of ordinary humanity is not a grievous fault. Mr. Irving's sense of the picturesque is very keen, and it was plain that he intended this impersonation for the eye and the fancy more than for the judgment. If tested by the rules of probability or consistency, it would have been found radically false and incoherent. Innocence herself could never have been cozened by so palpable a hypocrite as this, and it is preposterous to suppose that so groveling a coward could by any chance have become a ruler of men. In the veritable *Louis* there were, in spite of his hideous vices and despicable weaknesses, certain elements of greatness which in this portrayal are never even dimly suggested. The actor simply out-Heroded Herod by bringing into the strongest relief the theatrical side of the character so vividly sketched by Sir Walter Scott. The cleverness of the whole performance was extraordinary, and the effect of it was all the greater, because the very exaggeration of the outlines in the picture drawn concealed effectually the mannerisms which marred all the rest of Mr. Irving's impersonations. It was difficult, however, for the most ardent admirer of the actor to mention a point where absolute greatness was displayed. There was no opportunity, of course, for pathos, and there was assuredly no manifestation of passion. The exhibi-

tion of craven fear, in the interview with *Nemours*, was perhaps the nearest approach to it, but there was no effect in this which could not be wrought by theatrical device. The great merits of the performance lay in the wonderful manner in which the fanciful and grotesque ideal was sustained, and the skill with which the weaknesses of the actor were converted into excellences. There was not an instant which did not afford its evidence of deliberate calculation and assiduous rehearsal, and there were little bits of masterful treatment here and there which lived long in the memory. Among them may be noted the picture of the king warming his wizened and wicked old carcass by the fire in his bed-chamber, mumbling excuses to his leaden saints for the one little sin more which he hoped to commit on the morrow; the scene with the peasants, with its ghastly suggestions, and the final death episode, the horrifying effect of which was due not only to the rare skill of the acting, but to the startling contrast between the wasted, bloodless body and the splendor, in texture and color, of its habiliments. The portraiture throughout was a marvel of detail, most cunningly devised and most beautifully executed. It failed only, as the preceding impersonations had failed, at the crises where the glow of true passion was essential to vitality.

This season closed with 'Vanderdecken,' a mere reference to which must now suffice, and then Mr. Irving made another step upward and became the sole manager of the theatre of which he had so long been the chief attraction. He opened with 'Hamlet,' on Dec. 30, 1878, and from that day until the present

time he has enjoyed the fullest measure of fame and prosperity. Whatever may be the final estimate of him as an actor, his reputation as the most learned and enlightened manager of modern times is assured. Not even Charles Kean ever excelled him in the conscientious care and magnificent liberality of his theatrical representations, and under his direction the Lyceum Theatre has become a veritable school of dramatic art. The splendor of the scenery of his 'Hamlet,' and the general excellence of his supporting company, evoked the warmest critical approval, and from the standard which he then set he has never once departed. After 'Hamlet' came a number of revivals, all splendidly mounted with the closest attention to accuracy and artistic effect, and then in 1879 he produced the 'Merchant of Venice,' in which occurred a series of the most lovely pictures ever seen upon the mimic stage. His *Shylock* was the target, as usual, for a vast amount of criticism, chiefly on account of its many contradictions; but his management of the trial scene was extremely fine, the *Jew* becoming invested with a forlorn dignity which was infinitely pathetic, while the living group of which he was the central figure formed one of the most brilliant and truthful tableaux ever seen upon any stage. This play was repeated for two hundred and fifty nights.

In 1880 Mr. Irving appeared with moderate success in the 'Corsican Brothers,' and in Tennyson's 'Cup.' The season of 1881 was particularly memorable, for then Mr. Irving, with fine artistic instinct and the most generous appreciation of a great rival, invited Mr. Edwin Booth to his stage and acted with him in

'Othello,' alternating the characters of *Iago* and the *Moor* with the distinguished American tragedian. It is not necessary here to contrast the styles or compare the merits of these famous artists. Mr. Irving's *Othello* was never accounted, even by his most devoted admirers, among his best parts, but as *Iago* he was able to stand the test of comparison with the famous impersonation of the American actor. His delivery of the soliloquies was praised greatly, and the whole impersonation was remarkable for subtlety and consistency. In 1882 he produced 'Romeo and Juliet,' with a most wonderful completeness and richness of stage adornment and a cast of most uncommon excellence. Mr. Irving could scarcely hope to make a profound impression as the young Montague; but the general effect of a representation in which Mr. Terris, Mr. Howe, Mr. Tyars, Miss Ellen Terry and Mrs. Stirling bore prominent parts may be imagined. The masterpiece had never been interpreted with greater splendor or more artistic devotion, and the fame of the Lyceum and its manager waxed brighter than ever.

In 1882 Mr. Irving scored another triumph in his production of 'Much Ado About Nothing,' which was put upon the stage with a perfection of scenery and a delicacy of interpretation never witnessed by the present generation. The *Benedick* of Mr. Irving, if somewhat sombre, sparkled with incisive humor and was full of soldierly gallantry. The *Beatrice* of Ellen Terry was delicious, and the subordinate characters were distributed with such nicety of judgment that the illusion was as nearly perfect as possible. No more loving, poetic or truthful enactment of a Shak-

sperean comedy could be desired, and nothing can be compared with it except the performance of 'Twelfth Night,' which was one of the great features of Mr. Irving's American tour, which was now close at hand.

It is not within the province of this article to expatiate upon the social honors which were showered upon Mr. Irving before his departure from England to visit the new world. They were plentiful enough and rare enough to satiate the ambition of any man. Even the great universities offered him laurels. He was the chief guest at dinners tendered by the most eminent of his countrymen in social rank, in art, and in literature; he enjoyed a triumphant progress through the provinces; he was made the especial object of even royal recognition. These facts are significant because they were really tributes to a man who had established his right to them by dint of dauntless courage, incessant labor, intellectual power, and a profound belief in the value of his art. Had they been the product of the art of the professional advertiser, they would have received no word of notice here. It was on Oct. 29, 1883, that Mr. Irving with his company, made his first professional appearance in the Star Theatre, New York, in the character of *Mathias*. In the new world, as in the old, his performance excited great variance of critical opinion, but his intellectual supremacy, his splendid management, his artistic resources, his versatility and his originality met with instant and permanent appreciation. He was recognized instantly as a man of the rarest capacities and the size of his audiences was limited only by the area of the theatres in which he played. The 'Bells' was succeeded by 'Charles I.,' and then followed

'Louis XI.,' the 'Merchant of Venice,' the 'Lyons Mail,' the 'Belle's Stratagem,' an act of 'Richard III.,' 'Hamlet,' 'Much Ado,' and 'Twelfth Night,' in which he won another splendid success as *Malvolio*, a character once played by Phelps and Compton, but which will be associated hereafter with the name of Irving. It is scarcely too much to say that the part never received adequate interpretation until he brought his patience and keen powers of insight into character to bear upon it.

This is a theme upon which it would be pleasant to dilate, but the present article has exceeded already its prescribed limits. Mr. Irving played in most of the principal cities of the United States, meeting everywhere with enthusiastic welcome, elevating public taste and setting a standard by which future stage productions in that country will be judged, and after a farewell visit to New York, ended even more brilliantly than his first began, returned to London and the Lyceum. His latest triumph is 'Faust.' In *Mephistopheles* he has found a part exactly suited to his peculiar abilities. In this, he is easily supreme both as actor and manager. All the former glories of Lyceum scenery have been transcended in this latest production, which has demonstrated the possibility of giving tangible form to the loftiest imaginations of poetry. In the mocking fiend he has hit upon a character in which all of the resources of his art, his personal attributes, and his intellectual training can find opportunity for the fullest expression, and his performance of it will rank with the best work which he has hitherto done.

In the final summing up of his dramatic powers the

verdict must be that his chief excellence lies in eccentric comedy and that kind of romantic melodrama which does not demand the expression of passionate emotion. Nature has opposed an insuperable bar to his progress in this direction. His frame is slight, his voice is weak in volume and restricted in compass, and his features, although they are most refined, intelligent, and mobile, are cast in too delicate a mould to give full expression to the higher passions. Garrick and Edmund Kean were small men, to be sure, but their voices were of great flexibility and power, and both were filled with the might of genius. Of this most precious gift Mr. Irving has shown no trace. His career would not be half so interesting, instructive, and honorable as it is, were it not for the courage and resolution with which he has faced and overcome all obstacles. Throughout all the best years of early manhood, he acted in provincial theatres in every variety of play known to the stage. It is a curious reflection that, not very many years ago, the present accepted representative of *Hamlet*, *Lear*, and *Macbeth* was only known in London as a player of eccentric light comedy and farce, who delighted by his grotesque portrayal of such characters as *Jeremy Diddler* and *Alfred Jingle*. All through these humble, laborious, and unremunerative days he was gradually acquiring that mastery of stage technique in which he probably has no superior. There is nothing unnatural in the supposition that he may have contracted some of his most curious mannerisms in those old days when he moved his audiences to uproarious laughter by the agility of his contortions and his representation of comic starvation. This sort of work could never

have been congenial to so ambitious and intelligent a man, but he performed it with all the earnestness and care which he now expends upon his masterpieces of stage production. Almost everything that he undertook was marked by originality and purpose. His execution was always bold, prompt, and precise, as if each mechanical detail had been carefully arranged beforehand, and nothing was left to chance or the inspiration of the moment. This mechanical precision is one of the most noteworthy features of his acting now, and is carried to such a pitch of perfection that it is almost impossible to detect any difference between two or more of his performances of the same part. Premeditation of this kind is an infallible safeguard against slovenly performances, but also tends to act as a clog to inspiration, and may possibly have had a bad effect in Mr. Irving's own case. Whether or not his persistence in certain ungainly gestures during this early period of his career, when he dealt largely in burlesque exaggeration, is the cause of the curious mannerisms which are such terrible disfigurements now, is a question which it would be interesting to settle. It is scarcely credible that any intelligent actor, especially with that keen artistic sense which Mr. Irving possesses, would ever deliberately adopt them as appropriate to every stage character. Charity, therefore, demands that his sins, in the way of walk and gesture, should be ascribed to unconscious habit. For his unaccountable system of elocution some other explanation must be invented. That it is not physical misfortune is happily demonstrated by the crisp and simple method of delivery which he employs when he chooses. Whatever his theory may be, it is a bad

one. Nothing could be much more distressing to the ear than the gasping ejection of syllable by syllable in a dolorous monotone, which he tries to pass current for honest elocution, but which is fatal to rhythm, melody, and often to sense itself. But, after all, this is only one of the contradictions in which Mr. Irving's work abounds. His scholarly taste does not prevent him from violating the laws of proportion; he is a master of gesture, and yet descends to mere contortion; he is capable of creating the finest effects by the strength of artistic repose, and yet sometimes ruins a noble scene by inexcusable restlessness.

But it is ungracious to pursue this line of thought further. It is more pleasant to reflect upon the noble service which he has rendered to the contemporary stage; how he has elevated his profession to the place which it ought to occupy among the arts, and taught the great unthinking public the wondrous beauties of masterpieces which, on account of maltreatment, were sinking into contempt or oblivion. Henry Irving is a benefactor of his race and his name will endure when the theatre which he has raised to eminence has "crumbled to ruins, and mouldered in dust away."

J. RANKEN TOWSE.

The desperate calm of mingled passion and fear in the great scene of 'Eugene Aram'; the controlled pathos of the closing act of 'Charles I.'; the sinister comedy of 'Richard III.'; *Shylock's* fixed and unalterable resolve of vengeance, subtly alternating in its expression between the low cunning and husbanded cruelty of a humiliated race, and the dignity that is

the inalienable possession of suffering and wrong; the humor that plays upon the surface of *Iago's* passionless delight in human torture; the chivalrous sympathy with sorrow, and the manly tenderness of heart, that break through the cynical armor of *Benedick;* these are, to my mind, memorable instances of an actor's power over his art and over his audience that will outlast the objections, however justly grounded in themselves, that can be brought against isolated passages in each or all of the performances in which they are displayed.

J. COMYNS CARR, in the *Fortnightly Review*, February, 1883.

Mr. Henry Irving's visit to this country this year and the last was not only profitable to him, but it was very advantageous to us. Whatever rank may be assigned to him as an actor, his service to the stage is incontestable. His personal graces and modesty, the entire freedom of the gentleman in private life from the "staginess" which is commonly associated with actors in retirement, his cultivation and simple urbanity, have corrected the impression that an actor cannot be a "common gentleman," but must be always striking an attitude and rolling out his "deep-mouthed ohs and ahs." This is an excellent service, because it places the actor upon the same plane of self-respecting propriety and courtesy with the men of all other professions.

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS, in *Harper's Magazine*, June, 1885.

Irving, no doubt, owes much of his success—his

most deserved and legitimate success—to his resemblance to Macready and Charles Kean. His "You annoy me very much!" in *Digby Grant*, was Macready over again; and much of his "mannerism" is intensely Macreadyish. His "intensity" (for want of a better word, but it is not the one that quite expresses my meaning) is essentially Charles Keany. The combination is a happy one, and the public benefit therefrom.

HENRY J. BYRON, in the 'Green Room.' Christmas, 1880.

Furthermore, there never was an actor, that attained to eminence, who was not as distinctly marked as Mr. Irving is, with personal peculiarities. Garrick sputtered. Mossop inflated himself like the arrogant and bellicose turkey. Edmund Kean croaked like a raven. John Philip Kemble had chronic asthma and spoke in a high falsetto. Macready stammered and grunted. Holland snuffled. Burke twisted his spindle legs. Forrest "chewed the cud," like an ox. Charlotte Cushman had a masculine figure, a gaunt face, and a broken and quavering voice. These things have little or nothing to do with the essential question. The art of acting is a complex art, made up of many arts. It is not an actor's business always to be graceful in his attitudes and movements, or always to be regular and polished in his periods and enunciation. Every artist has a way of his own, by which he reaches his results. Mr. Irving's way is not the best way for everybody, because the only true, right and conclusive way of universal human nature; but, undoubtedly, it is the best way for him. He produces marvellously fine effects by

it, and therefore he is right in using it. Within a certain field and up to a certain point, it is invincible and triumphant. As far as he now stands disclosed upon this stage Mr. Irving is a thorough and often a magnificent artist, one who makes even his defects to help him, and one who leaves nothing to blind and whirling chance; and if the light that shines through his work be not the light of genius, by what name shall it be called?

WILLIAM WINTER: 'Henry Irving,' *p.* 31.

In proportion as a character calls for intellect rather than purely histrionic qualities in its interpreter—in proportion as it addresses itself to the intellect rather than the sympathy of the audience—in precisely the same proportion does Mr. Irving succeed in it. His *Hamlet* is better than his *Macbeth* or *Othello*, his *Shylock* than his *Hamlet*, his *Richard* than his *Shylock*; while his *Iago*, who speaks direct from brain to brain, comes as near perfection as anything he has done. By intellect Mr. Irving enters "into the skin" of *Charles I.* and *Richelieu*. By intellect he makes *Dubosc* a living type, *Mathias* a haunting recollection. By intellect he produces the effect of masterful decision of purpose, which saves even his worst parts from the fatal reproach of feebleness. By intellect he makes us forget his negative failings and forgive his positive faults. By intellect, he forces us to respect where we cannot admire him. By intellect he dominates the stage.

WILLIAM ARCHER: 'Henry Irving, Actor and Manager,' *pp.* 91-2.

MR. IRVING'S MEPHISTOPHELES.

When the gray shapes of dread, adoring, fall
Before the Red One, towering o'er them all ;
The one whose voice and gesture, face and form,
Proclaim him Prince of the unhallowed storm,
Who stands unmoved amid the fiery tide
And rain of flame that sweep the mountain side ;
Then, as the ribald pageant fades from view,
We think the Fiend himself commands the crew.
But when the mask is down, and when a smile
Wreathes the dark face, and flattering words beguile ;
When, whimsical, half careless of deceiving,
He plays upon the student's fond believing ;
When from beneath the cavalier's disguise
The Snake unveils the menace of his eyes ;
When, with a far-off ring of his despair,
His scathing laughter splits the frighted air,
Then, more than in the Brocken's maddening revel,
We seem to see and hear the living Devil.

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK, in *Longman's Magazine*, March, 1886.

MR. JOSEPH JEFFERSON.

No need to chronicle the triumphs won
By our incomparable Jefferson!
Long may the old-time sweetness of his speech
Dwell in our ears when he shall cease to teach;
Long will the memory hold his witching art,
As imaged in each finely-ordered part,
Where laughing wit lay close to throbbing heart —
The strut of *Acres* with his paper frills,
And *Rip's* deep slumber 'mid the storied hills.

WILLIAM L. KEESE.

MR. JOSEPH JEFFERSON.

Some fifty-four years ago, a man got up to represent a most eccentric and agile negro, walked upon the stage of the Washington Theatre, carrying a large bag. The contents of the bag he emptied upon the stage, the contents being a little boy, who was dressed in exact imitation of the man. This man was tall and gawky; but full of an odd humor. He faced the audience and sang :

> Ladies and gentlemen, I'd have yer for to know,
> I'se got a little darkey here, to jump Jim Crow.

And then the boy and the man danced the dance and sang the song that are remembered to this day. The boy, however, could not pronounce the words aright. He was only four years old.

The man was Thomas D. Rice, the original 'Jim Crow.' The boy was Joseph Jefferson.

This little Jefferson belonged to the fourth generation of a family of actors. His great-grandfather had gone on the stage under Garrick's patronage, or at least with his help and advice. His grandfather, an able and even brilliant actor, arrived in America in 1795 and made himself a notable name. His father was a quiet and unambitious man; better thought of for his personal worth than for his talents. But all these three were good men, honest, upright, intelligent;

and the fourth of the direct line, the Joseph Jefferson whom we know to-day, came into the world with the best of inheritance—the blood of a good and worthy stock.

His performance with Rice was not his first appearance on the stage. He was born Feb. 20, 1829, in Philadelphia, of Joseph Jefferson and Cornelia Frances Jefferson.* At three years of age he was the child of *Cora*, in 'Pizarro,' at the Washington Theatre. Here also he had already given infantile imitations of Fletcher, the Statue Man.

When he was eight years old he was playing a *Pirate* at the Franklin Theatre, in New York, and an infant phenomenon named Titus was a virtuous *Sailor*, and nightly overthrew him in a broad-sword combat. Then his kindly, luckless father "took to the road," and the boy strolled, after the fashion of the Thespian vagabonds of Elizabeth's day, through the West and the South, playing in barns and tavern dining-rooms; and even tracking the army of the United States into Mexico when the war broke out.

He was twenty years old when he came back to New York and played at Chanfrau's National Theatre. There, also, played Miss Margaret Clements Lockyer, a bright English girl of eighteen, who became Mrs. Joseph Jefferson on May 19, 1850. These young people acted in the one company that Fall, at the Olympic. The next year Jefferson was at Niblo's Garden, in the same list with Lester Wallack, Blake, Mrs. John Drew, and Charles Wheatleigh. Then he

* His mother was a Miss Thomas, daughter of a French refugee from St. Domingo. She married Thomas Burke, the comedian, and a year or two after his death became Mrs. Jefferson.

turned manager and went through the South, ending his tour with a stay in Philadelphia and another stay in Baltimore. In 1856 he went to Europe, and saw what London and Paris had to show in the way of acting.

In that year Miss Laura Keene opened her theatre in New York, and Jefferson was of the company. He played *Dr. Pangloss* in 1857, and in the next year he and Edward A. Sothern made two great hits as *Asa Trenchard* and *Lord Dundreary* in 'Our American Cousin.' Then he went to the Winter Garden, under the management of William Stuart and Dion Boucicault, and played *Caleb Plummer*, and wrote the version of 'Oliver Twist' in which J. W. Wallack, Jr. made *Fagin* famous.

It was in 1861 that his wife died, and he took to wandering in his loneliness; he was, moreover, sick of body.

But he was now a popular actor; more, indeed, a recognized artist. He had served a long and hard apprenticeship, of which these few pages can give but the slightest and most inadequate record. He had played a wonderful range of parts; he had shown himself a comedian in the sense of being an interpreter of human nature. He had proved that he possessed comic force and pathetic force; he had established himself among the skilled and earnest exponents of the dramatic art; he had won the favor and the respect of the people, as an actor, and as a man; and his public life lay before him, to be worked out according to his best ambitions.

He appeared on the stage of San Francisco, and stayed there from July to Nov., 1861. The next four

years he spent in Australia. In Tasmania he played *Bob Brierly* before an audience of ticket-of-leave-men; and he pleased them, fortunately for himself—for they had not meant to be pleased.

Mr. Dion Boucicault was in London in 1865, and to him came Mr. Jefferson, just arrived in England, by way of Panama, with an idea. There was a story of Washington Irving's called 'Rip Van Winkle,' which had furnished the basis for half-a-dozen or maybe a dozen plays, more or less bad, most of them. One of these was in Jefferson's possession. He had acted in it years before, when Charles Burke, William Chapman, J. H. (*Falstaff*) Hackett, William Isherwood and others, had tried their fortunes as *Rip*. Jefferson saw how the play could be written; Boucicault saw still more in it, and re-wrote the drama. It was produced at the London Adelphi, Sept. 4, 1865. It was a success, and Mr. Jefferson found his best part in *Rip*. The judgment of the English public was confirmed in America, and 'Rip Van Winkle' was Jefferson's main-stay, and *Rip* the part with which the people identified him—to speak literally—until 1880, when he appeared in Philadelphia as *Bob Acres* in his own revision of the 'Rivals,' and scored a success that has divided popular favor with his impersonation of the character hinted at in Irving's story.

Mr. Jefferson married for the second time in 1867. The second Mrs. Jefferson was a Miss Warren, a distant relative. He has had nine children—six by his first wife, three by his second. Two have been on the stage, and are now in private life. One daughter is the wife of Farjeon, the novelist. One boy is named after William Winter, the brilliant dramatic critic, to



JOSEPH JEFFERSON
As Bob Acres in "The Rivals."

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whom the present writer must acknowledge his indebtedness for biographical facts and figures. Mr. Winter's 'Lives of the Jeffersons,' are models of conscientious record, and tell in a charming way the history of this famous family.

This is the simple story of a man who is an honor to the stage, and who has done the stage great honor—the fourth of a line of good men and good actors. There is, of course, much more to be said of him. It seems unnecessary, however, to tell Americans that Joseph Jefferson's private life has been as admirable as his professional career: that he is a charming companion and a good friend. It is known that he is a man of intellect and accomplishments; a skilful painter, and not unused to literary work.

But there is something more to be said of Mr. Jefferson's permanent hold upon popular regard. The American populace has a way of its own of giving affectionate nicknames to those whom it holds in high esteem. It has re-christened Andy Jackson, Dan'l (not Daniel) Webster and Abe Lincoln. It has given the accolade of affectionate familiarity to Phil Sheridan and Stonewall Jackson. In all this there is nothing of disrespect or discourtesy. It means simply friendly recognition and generous adoption. And the people of this country long ago decreed that Joseph Jefferson should be and remain Jo Jefferson.

This is mainly because, in playing *Rip Van Winkle* he breathed the breath of his own life into a character so human, so true, so sweet and lovable in spite of all his weakness that the people took him to their heart as we take a dear, wilful child into our arms.

Humanity is the key-note of Jefferson's conception of *Rip Van Winkle*. In the strange smacking of the chops—that hideous chuckle of incipient drunkenness—in the quavering pathos of the voice with which the old outcast pleads for recognition from the daughter to whom he is but a memory—Jefferson's *Rip* is intensely and sympathetically human. This is the great thing that Jo Jefferson has done. He has put before us, living in the flesh, a man who is lovable even though he be a sot, an idler, a creature negligent of every duty of a husband and a father; and he has not made us love any of these vile things, but only the man whom we must love in spite of them. We go to look at the very human being thus portrayed, and we come away, not too proud that we have conformed in all things to the code of the Pharisees, wishing, perhaps, that we were even as this Publican in the love and simplicity that brings the little children about his knees; wishing, certainly, that our superiority were less of a reproach to him and more a help to make him better.

H. C. BUNNER.

September 30, 1858.

Mr. Irving came in town to remain a few days. In the evening went to Laura Keene's Theatre to see young Jefferson as *Goldfinch*, in Holcroft's comedy of the 'Road to Ruin.' Thought Jefferson, the father, one of the best actors he had ever seen; and the son reminded him, in look, gesture, size and *make*, of the father. Had never seen the father in *Goldfinch*, but was delighted with the son.

'Life and Letters of Washington Irving,' *vol. iv., p.* 253.

The opening of the third act [of 'Rip Van Winkle'] shows him at his awaking with rotten clothes and long white hair and beard—an exaggeration not required. The story had said that his beard was gray and gray would be, in the dramatic rendering, most truly effective. The drama in this act is at its poorest, but Mr. Jefferson is at his best. Retaining his old Dutch English with a somewhat shrill pipe of age in its tone, he quickly makes the most of every opportunity of representing the old man's bewilderment. His third approach to an understanding of the change he finds, his faint touch of the sound of old love in believing his wife dead, and in action with humorous sense of relief, his trembling desire and dread of news about his daughter, and, in a later scene the pathos of his appeal to her for recognition are all delicately true.

HENRY MORLEY: 'Journal of a London Playgoer,' Sept. 23, 1886.

From the moment of *Rip's* entrance upon the scene —for it is *Rip Van Winkle*, and not Mr. Jefferson,— the audience has assurance that a worthy descendant of the noblest of the old players is before them. He leans lightly against a table, his disengaged hand holding his gun. Standing there, he is in himself the incarnation of the lazy, good-natured, dissipated, good-for-nothing Dutchman that Irving drew. Preponderance of humor is expressed in every feature, yea, in every limb and motion of the light, supple figure. The kindly, simple, *insouciant* face, ruddy, smiling, lighted by the tender, humorous blue eyes, which look down upon his dress, elaborately copied bit by bit

from the etchings of Darley; the lounging, careless grace of the figure; the low, musical voice, whose utterances are "far above singing"; the sweet, rippling laughter—all combine to produce an effect which is rare in its simplicity and excellence, and altogether satisfying.

The impersonation is full of what are technically known as *points;* but the genius of Mr. Jefferson divests them of all "staginess," and they are only such points as the requirements of his art, its passion, humor, or dignity, suggests. From the rising of the curtain on the first scene, until its fall on the last, nothing is forced, sensational, or unseemly. The remarkable beauty of the performance arises from nothing so much as its entire repose and equality.

The scene, however, in which the real greatness of the player is shown in his "so potent art," is the last scene of the first act. It is marvellously beautiful in its human tenderness and dignity. Here the debauched good-for-nothing, who has squandered life, friends, and fortune, is driven from his home with a scorn pitiless as the storm-filled night without. The scene undoubtedly owes much to the art of the dramatist, who has combined the broadest humor in the beginning with the deepest pathos at the close. Here there is "room and verge enough" for the amplest display of the comedian's power. And the opportunities are nobly used. His utterance of the memorable words, "Would you drive me out like a dog?" is an unsurpassed expression of power and genius. His sitting with his face turned from the audience during his dame's tirade, his stunned, dazed look as he rises, his blind groping from his chair to the table, are

all actions conceived in the very noblest spirit of art.

In a moment the lazy drunkard, stung into a new existence by the taunts of his vixenish wife, throws off the shell which has encased his better self, and rises to the full stature of his manhood—a man sorely stricken, but every inch a man. All tokens of debauchery are gone ; vanished all traces of the old careless indolence and humor. His tones, vibrating with the passion that consumes him, are clear and low and sweet—full of doubt that he has heard aright the words of banishment—full of an awful pain and pity and dismay. And so, with one parting farewell to his child, full of a nameless agony, he goes out into the storm and darkness.

The theatre does not " rise at him " : it does more —give finer appreciation of the actor's power ; it is deadly silent for minutes after, or would be, but for some sobbing women there.

After a scene so effective, in which the profoundest feelings of his auditors are stirred, the task of the comedian in maintaining the interest of the play becomes exceedingly onerous ; but Mr. Jefferson nowhere fails to create and absorb the attention of his audience. One scene is enacted as well as another ; and that he not always creates the same emotion is not his fault, but that of the dramatist. The player is always equal to the requirements of his art.

The versatility of Mr. Jefferson's powers is finely shown in the scene of *Rip's* awaking from his sleep in the Catskills, and in those scenes which immediately follow. Here he has thrown off his youth, his hair has whitened, his voice is broken to a childish tremble,

his very limbs are shrunken, tottering, palsied. This maundering, almost imbecile old man, out of whose talk come dimly rays of the old quaint humor, would excite only ridicule and laughter in the hands of an artist less gifted than Mr. Jefferson; but his griefs, his old affections, so rise up through the tones of that marvellous voice, his loneliness and homelessness so plead for him that old *Lear*, beaten by the winds, deserted and houseless, is not more wrapped about with honor than poor old *Rip*, wandering through the streets of his native village.

Exactly wherein lies Mr. Jefferson's chief power it is not easy to show. With the genius inherited from "Old Joe" he possesses a mind richly stored, a refined taste, and that rare knowledge of his art which teaches the force of repression as well as expression. Mr. Jefferson is also a close and conscientious student. The words that flow from his tongue in such liquid resonance seem the very simplest of utterances. And so they are; but it would be interesting to know how many hours of study it cost him to arrive at that simplicity which is the crowning charm and secret of success. Why, in the very speaking of his daughter's name in the last scene—in that matchless appeal to her for recognition—"*Meenie, Meenie,*"—there is a depth of pathos, tenderness, and beauty that charms like music, and attunes the heart to the finest sense of pity.

'Among the Comedians': *Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1867.

How delicately and with what exquisite tone, as the painters would say, Mr. Jefferson plays the part,

everybody knows. People return again and again to see him, as to see a lovely landscape or a favorite picture. Indeed, it is the test of high art that it does not pall in its impression. There is no acting, perhaps, so little exaggerated as this of *Rip Van Winkle*, but there is none so effective. It is wholly free from declamation, and from every kind of fustian. It is absolutely nature, but it is the nature of art. There is something touching in the intentness of the audience, which is seldom broken by ordinary applause, but which responds sensitively to every emotion of the actor. And the curious felicity of his naturalness is observable in the slightest detail. No wholly imaginary object was ever more palpably real than the dog Schneider. And he is made so merely by a word or two from *Rip*.

GEORGE WILLIAM CURTIS, in *Harper's Monthly*, March, 1871.

Mr. Jefferson is an actor of exquisite art. As a comedian, he would hold his own beside the finest comic artist of France—M. Regnier, M. Got, M. Coquelin. The portrait he presents of *Rip Van Winkle* is a singularly felicitous example of the possible union of great breadth and freedom of effect with the utmost delicacy and refinement. Mr. Jefferson's *Rip Van Winkle* has an ideal elevation, while at the same time it is thoroughly human. It is saturated with kindly and wholesome humor, and the spirit of gentleness pervades it. Although *Rip* himself is an idle good-for-nothing and ne'er-do-well, we accept Mr. Jefferson's presentation of him as a personification of the beautiful and the good.

BRANDER MATTHEWS, in *Scribner's Magazine*, July, 1879.

A man of singularly sweet, gentle and sincere nature, of strong likes and dislikes, full of imagination colored by superstition, of profound religious convictions—which are his own, and upon which we shall lay no coarse hand—with an underflow of shrewd thought that imperceptibly affects his art, and which shows itself therein to watchful eyes, especially in *Rip* and *Asa Trenchard*, and even in *Bob Acres*. He is in fact, all the better part of *Rip*, with all the baser part omitted. "What are you teaching your boys?" we once asked him. "To fish and—tell the truth," was his slow, thoughtful reply in the words of Sir Walter Scott. So might *Rip* in his shrewder moods have answered the same query.

L. CLARK DAVIS, in *Lippencott's Magazine*, July, 1879.

Jefferson has considered that a country squire need not necessarily reek of the ale-house and the stables; that *Acres* is neither the noisy and vulgar *Tony Lumpkin*, nor the "horsey" *Goldfinch;* that there is, in a certain way, a little touch of the *Wildrake* in his composition; that he is not less kindly because vain and empty-headed; that he has tender ties of home, and a background of innocent, domestic life; that his head is completely turned by contact with town fashions; that there may be a kind of artlessness in his ridiculous assumption of rakish airs; that there is something a little pitiable in his braggadocio; that he is a good fellow, at heart; and that his sufferings in the predicament of the duel are genuine, intense, and quite as doleful as they are comic. All this appears in the personation. You are struck at once by the

elegance of the figure, the grace of movement, the winning appearance and temperament; and *Bob Acres* gets your friendship, and is a welcome presence, laugh at him as you may. Jefferson has introduced a comic blunder with which to take him out of the first scene with *Absolute*, and also some characteristic comic business for him, before a mirror, when *Sir Lucius*, coming upon him unawares, finds him practising bows and studying deportment. He does not seem contemptible in these situations; he only seems, as he ought to seem, absurdly comical. He communicates to every spectator his joy in the success of his curl-papers; and no one, even amidst uncontrollable laughter, thinks of his penning of his challenge as otherwise than a proceeding of the most serious importance. He is made a lovable human being, with an experience of action and suffering, and our sympathies with him, on his battle-field, would be really painful but that we are in the secret, and know it will turn out well. The interior spirit of Jefferson's impersonation, then, is soft humanity and sweet good-nature; and the traits that he has especially emphasized are ludicrous vanity and comic trepidation. He never leaves a moment unfilled with action, when he is on the scene, and all his by-play is made tributary to the expression of these traits. One of his fresh and deft touches is the trifling with *Captain Absolute's* gold-laced hat, and—obviously to the eye—considering whether it would be becoming to himself. The acting is full of these bits of felicitous embroidery. Nothing could possibly be more humorous or more full of nature than the mixture of assurance, uneasy levity, and dubious apprehension, at the moment

when the challenge has at last and irrevocably found its way into *Captain Absolute's* pocket. The rueful face, then, is a study for a painter, and only a portrait could do it justice. The mirth of the duel scene it is impossible to convey. It must be supreme art indeed which can arouse, at the same instant, as this does, an almost tender solicitude and an extinguishable laughter. The little introductions of a word or two here and there in the text, made at this point by the comedian, are delightfully happy. To make *Acres* say that he doesn't care "how little the risk is," was an inspiration; and his sudden and joyous greeting, "How are you, Falkland?"—with the relief that it implies, and the momentary return of the airy swagger, —is a stroke of genius. The performance, altogether, is as exquisite a piece of comedy as ever has been seen, in our time. You do not think, till you look back upon it, how fine it is,—so easy is its manner, and so perfectly does it sustain the illusion of real life.

WM. WINTER, in the *New York Tribune*, September 16, 1880.

By the way, talking of *Caleb Plummer*, when I opened the Winter Garden, in 1859, having engaged Joe Jefferson as leading comedian, it struck me that *Caleb Plummer* was a character he could grasp. He was called to rehearsal, and the part was placed in his hand. I shall never forget the expression on his face. Approaching him, I said: "What's the matter, Joe?" "Oh," he replied, "don't ask me to play this. I have tried it in the old edition and failed in it conspicuously. You have brought me to New York. Is

this to be my opening part?" I tried vainly to persuade him that he would make a hit in it. He would not see it. However, I was obliged to insist, and he went to his duty. He began to rehearse, and I saw at once he had struck the wrong key. He mistook the character. He made it a weary, dreary, sentimental old bore. Rising from my managerial chair, I stopped the rehearsal. "Sit there, Joe," I said, placing him in my seat. I took his place on the stage; then, giving an imitation of himself, playing the character as I knew he could play it, in a comic, simple, genial vein, I had not spoken three speeches before he began to wriggle in his chair; and then, leaping up, he cried, "Stop! I see! I know! that is enough;"—and so it was. He struck the key. Those who saw his performance can understand how fine and delicate a piece of work his portraiture of the old toy-maker was.

But this was in 1859. Let us return to 1865. Jefferson was anxious to appear in London. All his pieces had been played there. The managers would not give him an appearance unless he could offer them a new play. He had played a piece called 'Rip Van Winkle,' but when submitted to their perusal, they rejected it. Still he was so desirous of playing *Rip* that I took down Washington Irving's story and read it over. It was hopelessly undramatic. "Joe," I said, "this old sot is not a pleasant figure. He lacks romance. I dare say you made a fine sketch of the old beast, but there is no interest in him. He may be picturesque, but he is not dramatic. I would prefer to start him in a play as a young scamp—thoughtless, gay, just such a curly-headed, good-humored fellow as

all the village girls would love, and the children and dogs would run after." Jefferson threw up his hands in despair. It was totally opposed to his artistic preconception. But I insisted, and he reluctantly conceded.

Well, I wrote the play as he plays it now. It was not much of a literary production, and it was with some apology it was handed to him. He read it, and when he met me, I said: "It is a poor thing, Joe." "Well," he replied, "it is good enough for me." It was produced. Three or four weeks afterward he called on me, and his first words were: "You were right about making *Rip* a young man. Now I could not conceive and play him in any other shape."

DION BOUCICAULT, in the *Critic*, April 7, 1883.

Over his *Caleb* in our reminiscences we like to linger. We saw it often, never wearied of it, and were willing to go to Winter Garden at least once a week to sympathize with *Caleb*, to laugh at and rejoice with him, and to shed over him tears which we could not restrain, and of which we had no reason to be ashamed. There were not many dry eyes in the house those nights, when the old man in 'Chirp the Last' began to realize that his dear boy from the golden South Americas was alive again and before him; and when he tried to tell his blind girl how for love of her he had deceived her, how the eyes in which she had put her trust had been false to her during all those years, we have known eyes to fill and to run over on the stage itself.

How plainly we can recall that scene in the toy-maker's cottage; the dolls, and Noah's arks, and small

fiddles, and barking dogs; *Bertha* making the dolls' dresses; and *Caleb* in his sackcloth coat, which she, in her blindness and her fondness, believed to be a garment that the Lord Mayor might have been proud of, finishing up a great toy horse. How plainly we can see the thorough goodness of the old man, as he described to *Bertha* the beautiful things by which they were surrounded, and which existed only in his loving, doting old heart; that quaint, humorous look on *Caleb's* face as he painted the numerous circles, and dots, and stripes, which gave to his preposterous horse a likeness to nothing known in natural history, and held it up with the satisfied remark that he did not see how he could outlay any more talent on the animal, at the price. He was not Joseph Jefferson, but *Caleb Plummer* himself; this was not a play, but the story realized.

LAURENCE HUTTON: 'Plays and Players,' *chap. xxiv., pp.* 197-9.

If any one, after witnessing Mr. Jefferson's *Caleb*, will take the trouble to read carefully Dickens's beautiful little story of the 'Cricket on the Hearth,' he will find a striking illustration of the truth of this theory in the radical difference between the author's conception of the old toy-maker and the actor's exposition of it. There is not a trace in Mr. Jefferson's *Caleb* of the dull, vacant, hopeless depression which the novelist paints with so pathetic a touch. He has not the dull eye and vacuous manner which tell of a spirit crushed by perpetual and remediless misery, because there is not in the comedian himself any sympathy with this particular phase of human nature.

His own temperament is buoyant, hopeful, placid, and sunny, and he naturally—it might be said, necessarily—invests *Caleb* with some of his own brightness and humor. He effects this, too, without robbing the part of any of its exquisite pathos. He even heightens the color of the picture by the artistic employment of contrast. The scene with the blind *Bertha* and *Tackleton* would not be half so touching and suggestive as it is, if the pitiful anxiety and wistful tenderness of *Caleb* at this juncture were not emphasized by the memory of the childlike mirth and simple gaiety of his meeting with *Peerybingle*, in the preceding scene. This old man, so ragged, cold, and timid, with his grateful appreciation of a kind word,—his bustling, nervous efforts to be of some assistance,—his beaming smile, playing around the pinched and drawn old lips,—his bright eye, now beaming with merriment, now eloquent with love or commiseration,—is a creation so absolutely human and real that, for the moment, all sense of the wonderful skill which creates the illusion is lost.

The full extent of that skill may be appreciated best by comparing this study of *Caleb* with that of *Rip*, and noting, not the occasional intonation, the curious little gasp, and other trifling points common to both impersonations, but the radical differences which exist between them. These are to be found, not in the variety of costume only,—the only pretense of versatility afforded by the ordinary hack-actor of the day,—but in the man himself, in his walk, in his gestures, in his carriage, in his address, in his voice, and in his laugh. The only constant point of resemblance between the two men is in the matter of age. In all other respects

they are as opposite as the poles. There is nothing in common between the reckless and shameless, if fascinating, jollity of *Rip* and the sweet, unselfish, indomitable cheerfulness of *Caleb*, or between the methods which throw a glamour of poetry and romance about the forlorn and forgotten reveller and those which are so infinitely pathetic in the case of the old toy-maker. On the one hand, a detestable character is endowed with irresistible charm by the sheer force of poetic imagination ; and on the other, a nature of a type at once the simplest and the highest is portrayed with a truth which is as masterly as it is affecting. There is nothing in 'Rip Van Winkle' more touching than those scenes where *Caleb* listens while *Dot* reveals to *Bertha* the story of his noble deceit, and where he recognizes the son whom he deemed lost in "the golden South Americas." The play of emotion on Mr. Jefferson's face at the moment of recognition, as wonderment, doubt, and hope are succeeded by certainty and rapturous joy,—his deprecatory, spasmodic action as he turns away from what he evidently fears is a delusion of the senses,—and his final rush into the arms of his son,—are triumphs of the highest kind. Here the actor is lost in the fictitious character, and the simulation becomes an actual impersonation, which is the highest possible dramatic achievement.

J. RANKEN TOWSE, in the *Century Magazine*, January, 1884.

Jefferson's persistent adherence to the character of *Rip Van Winkle* has often, and naturally, been made the subject of inquiry and remark. The late Charles Mathews once said to him : "Jefferson, I am glad to

see you making your fortune, but I hate to see you doing it with one part and a carpet-bag." "It is certainly better," answered the comedian, "to play one part and make it various, than to play a hundred parts and make them all alike."

WILLIAM WINTER: 'The Jeffersons,' *p.* 209.

* * * But Joseph Jefferson is unlike them all, —as distinct, as unique, and also as exquisite as Charles Lamb among essayists, or George Darley among lyrical poets. No actor of the past prefigured him,—unless, perhaps, it was John Bannister,—and no name throughout the teeming annals of art in the nineteenth century has shone with a more genuine lustre, or can be more proudly and confidently committed to the remembrance and esteem of posterity.

Ibid, p. 229.

MR. AND MRS. KENDAL.

Mark you yon eager throng who gaze and glow,
  All fired with keen delight — as pastures fair,
  Dowered with sunshine in the midday air,
Gleam in the presence of the god they know!
Each lip is tremulous with rapture: lo!
  Round mouth of maid the laughing circles fare;
  Or break on whitened beards or boy-cheeks bare;
By one soft smile all smiles are set in flow
Erewhile, perchance, sad sorrow had its place,
  Revealing pensive brows, and fraught with fears.
    This fair one to her magic hath no bound:
Sweet *Rosalind* enchants us by her grace,
  Or proud *Pauline* our pity gains by tears —
    No dearer Queen of Art the whole world round!

W. DAVENPORT ADAMS.



MR. AND MRS. W. H. KENDAL.



MR. AND MRS. KENDAL.

Margaret Shafto Robertson, better known as Miss "Madge" Robertson, best known as Mrs. Kendal, was born at Great Grimsby, March 15, 1849.* She was the youngest of a family of twelve, all more or less connected with the stage. Mr. T. W. Robertson, the playwright, was her eldest brother, more than twenty years her senior. At the age of three she appeared at the Marylebone Theatre, London, as the *Blind Child* in the 'Seven Poor Travellers'; and at six she played *Eva* in 'Uncle Tom's Cabin' at the Bristol Theatre, where she remained for several years. On July 29, 1865, she made her first appearance in London (since her childhood), playing *Ophelia* at the Haymarket to the *Hamlet* of Mr. Walter Montgomery, the lessee for the autumn season; and a month later, at the same theatre, she played *Desdemona* to the *Othello* of the negro tragedian, Ira Aldridge. In the autumn of 1865 she was a member of Mr. Montgomery's company at the Theatre Royal, Nottingham, and on Boxing Night of the same year she appeared as *Anne Carew* in 'A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing,' at the opening of the new Theatre Royal, Hull. Here she remained as leading lady for nearly a year. In the

* 1848 is the date usually given. We have Mrs. Kendal's own authority for the later year.—W. A.

spring of 1867 she starred at Liverpool and Nottingham, playing *Pauline*, *Juliet*, *Lady Teazle*, *Mrs. Haller*, *Peg Woffington* and other parts. Returning to London, she appeared at Drury Lane on Easter Monday, 1867, as *Edith Fairlam*, the heroine of Halliday's comedy-drama, the 'Great City,' and in the following autumn (Oct. 28) she joined the regular Haymarket Company under Buckstone's management. Here she appeared with Sothern in 'Our American Cousin,' 'Brother Sam,' and 'David Garrick,' created the part of *Blanche Dumont* in 'A Hero of Romance,' Dr. Westland Marston's adaptation of the 'Roman d'un jeune homme pauvre,' and played *Hypolita* in 'She Wou'd and She Wou'd Not' to Buckstone's *Trappanti*. After going on tour with the Haymarket Company in the autumn of 1868, she left it for a short time and appeared (Oct. 28) at the Theatre Royal, Hull, in 'Passion Flowers,' an adaptation of 'On ne badine pas avec l'amour,' made especially for her by T. W. Robertson. At the opening of the Gaiety Theatre, London (Dec. 21, 1868), she appeared with Alfred Wigan in 'On the Cards,' and at the same theatre in the following spring (March 28) she played *Lady Clara Vere de Vere* in T. W. Robertson's 'Dreams.' Two months later she rejoined the Haymarket Company, then on tour, playing the leading parts in all its stock comedies and adding to her repertory *Miss Hardcastle*, *Rosalind*, and *Viola*. She now remained a member of the Haymarket Company for five and a-half years, during which her talent steadily ripened and her popularity as steadily increased.

Mr. W. H. Kendal (William Hunter Grimston) had joined the Haymarket Company three years earlier.

Born in London, Dec. 16, 1843, he made his first appearance on the stage at the Royal Soho Theatre (now the Royalty) in 1861, playing the juvenile lover in a little piece called 'A Wonderful Woman.' After a good deal of experience at the Soho Theatre, and a short engagement at the Moor Street Theatre, Birmingham, which was brought to an end by the insolvency of the manager, he joined the stock company at the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, in the autumn of 1862. Here he was brought into contact with the leading stars of the period, Miss Helen Faucit, Charles Kean, G. V. Brooke, Phelps, Fechter, Anderson, Boucicault, Sothern and Charles James Mathews. Mr. Mathews interested himself greatly in Mr. Kendal's career, and procured his engagement at the Haymarket, where he appeared, Oct. 31, 1866, as *Augustus Mandeville* in 'A Dangerous Friend.' He was well received and was soon in possession of the leading juvenile parts. He played *Orlando* and *Romeo* to the *Rosalind* and *Juliet* of Mrs. Scott-Siddons, *Don Octavio* in the before-mentioned revival of 'She Wou'd and She Wou'd Not,' *Manfred* in Mosenthal's 'Pietra' and *Bob Gassit* in the first production of 'Mary Warner,' the two last-named parts during an engagement of Miss Bateman in 1868-9. It was in the following summer, as we have seen, that Miss Madge Robertson became a permanent member of the Haymarket Company. Her marriage with Mr. Kendal took place at St. Saviour's Church, Manchester, Aug. 7, 1869.

Mrs. Kendal's first "creation" at the Haymarket was *Lilian Vavasour* in 'New Men and Old Acres,' by Tom Taylor and A. W. Dubourg (Oct. 25, 1869).

This performance established her reputation, and Mr. W. S. Gilbert was quick to avail himself of her combined humor and pathos, dignity and tenderness, in his series of fantastic comedies in blank verse, commencing (Nov. 19, 1870) with the 'Palace of Truth,' in which she played *Zeolide* to Mr. Kendal's *Philamine*. 'Pygmalion and Galatea' followed (Dec. 9, 1871) with Mr. and Mrs. Kendal in the two title-parts; and in the 'Wicked World' (Jan. 4, 1873) Mrs. Kendal played *Selene* and her husband *Ethais*. Mr. Gilbert's modern comedy 'Charity' (Jan. 3, 1874) was not so successful, but the fault did not lie either in Mrs. Kendal's performance of *Mrs. Van Brugh* or in Mr. Kendal's *Frederic Smailey*. Meanwhile, both in London and on the provincial tours of Mr. Buckstone's company, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal had appeared at intervals with the greatest success in the legitimate repertory of the Haymarket, playing *Orlando* and *Rosalind* in 'As You Like It,' *Captain Absolute* and *Lydia Languish*, in the 'Rivals,' *Charles Surface* and *Lady Teazle* in the 'School for Scandal,' etc., etc. They had also produced with much applause several bright little duologues, such as 'Uncle's Will,' by Mr. S. Theyre Smith, and 'A Little Change,' by Mr. Sydney Grundy, while Mr. Kendal was very successful in such parts as *Jeremy Diddler* and *Horatio Craven* in 'His First Champagne.'

On leaving the Haymarket Mr. and Mrs. Kendal went for a short time (Jan. and Feb., 1875), to the Opera Comique, then under the managment of Mr. Hollingshead, appearing in the 'Lady of Lyons,' 'As You Like It,' and 'She Stoops to Conquer.' In the following spring (March 12) they joined the company

with which Mr. Hare commenced management at the Court Theatre, playing *Harry Armitage* and *Lady Flora* in Mr. Coghlan's 'Lady Flora'; *Christian Douglas* and *Mrs. Fitzroy* in 'A Nine Days' Wonder,' by Mr. Hamilton Aïdé; *Prince Florian* and the *Lady Hilda* in Mr. Gilbert's 'Broken Hearts'; and *Colonel Blake* and *Susan Hartley* in Mr. Palgrave Simpson's adaptation of the 'Pattes de mouche' entitled 'A Scrap of Paper.' At the beginning of Oct., 1876, Mr. and Mrs. Kendal migrated to the Prince of Wales's and appeared in the productions of 'Peril,' 'London Assurance,' and 'Diplomacy,' particulars of which will be found in the memoir of Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft included in this volume. They then returned to the Court Theatre, appearing (Jan. 4, 1879) in 'A Scrap of Paper.' This was followed (Feb. 15) by the 'Ladies' Battle,' in which they played *Gustave de Grignon* and the *Comtesse d'Autreval*, and by the 'Queen's Shilling' (April 19), an adaptation by Mr. G. W. Godfrey of the 'Fils de famille,' in which their parts were *Frank Maitland* and *Kate Greville*. The popularity of the 'Queen's Shilling' was not exhausted when, in the following autumn, Mr. Kendal went into partnership with Mr. Hare in the management of the St. James's Theatre, converting this unluckiest of houses into one of the most popular and fashionable theatres of London. The following is a list of the productions at the St. James's under the Hare-Kendal management:—

1879: Oct. 4, Val Prinsep's 'Monsieur le Duc'—Mr. Hare, *Richelieu*; and the 'Queen's Shilling'—Mr. Hare, *Colonel Daunt*; Dec. 18, Tennyson's 'Falcon'—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, *Count Federigo* and the *Lady Giovanna*.

1880: March 6, S. Theyre Smith's 'Old Cronies'; March 13, revival of 'Still Waters Run Deep'—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, *John Mildmay* and *Mrs. Sternhold*, Mr. Hare, *Mr. Potter;* the 'Queen's Shilling' was revived for a few weeks toward the end of May; June 17, a revival of the 'Ladies' Battle' and 'A Regular Fix'—Mr. Kendal, *Sir Hugh de Brass;* Oct. 9, 'William and Susan,' an adaptation by W. G. Wills of Jerrold's 'Black Eye'd Susan'—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal in the title parts, Mr. Hare, the *Admiral;* Dec. 4, 'Good Fortune,' an adaptation by Charles Coghlan of the 'Roman d'un jeune homme pauvre'—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, *Charles Denis* and *Isabel.*

1881: Jan. 8, Mr. Pinero's 'Money-Spinner'—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, *Lord Kengussie* and *Millicent Boycott*, Mr. Hare, *Baron Croodle;* and 'A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing'—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, *Jasper* and *Anne Carew;* April 18, after Easter Monday, the 'Money-Spinner' was played alternately with the 'Lady of Lyons'—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, *Claude Melnotte* and *Pauline*, Mr. Hare, *Colonel Damas;* May 28, 'Coralie,' an adaptation by G. W. Godfrey of Delpit's 'Fils de Coralie'—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, *Captain Mainwaring* and *Mrs. Trevor*, Mr. Hare, *Mr. Critchell;* Oct. 27, revival of 'Home'—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, *Colonel White* and *Mrs. Pinchbeck*, Mr. Hare, *Captain Mountraffe*, and the 'Cape Mail,' adapted by Clement Scott from 'Jeanne qui pleure et Jeanne qui rit'—Mrs. Kendal, *Mrs. Frank Preston;* Dec. 29, Pinero's 'Squire'—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, *Lieutenant Thorndyke* and *Kate Verity*, Mr. Hare, the *Rev. Paul Dormer;* this production was followed by a memorable controversy in which

Messrs. Hare, Kendal and Pinero were accused of having made unfair use of a dramatic version by Mr. Comyns Carr of Thomas Hardy's 'Far from the Madding Crowd.'

1882 : Dec. 9, 'Impulse,' an adaptation by B. C. Stephenson of the 'Maison du mari' by X. de Montépin and V. Kervany—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, *Captain Crichton* and *Mrs. Beresford.*

1883: Oct. 20, 'Young Folks' Ways' ('Esmeralda'), a play by Mrs. F. H. Burnett and Mr. W. H. Gillette, known in America as 'Esmeralda'—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, *Estabrook* and *Nora Desmond*, Mr. Hare, *Old Rogers ;* Dec. 20, a revival of 'A Scrap of Paper,' and S. Theyre Smith's 'A Case for Eviction.'

1884 : April 17, the 'Ironmaster,' a translation by A. W. Pinero of Ohnet's 'Maître de forges'—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, *Philippe Derblay* and *Claire de Beaupré.*

1885 : Jan. 24, a revival of 'As You Like It'—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, *Orlando* and *Rosalind*, Mr. Hare, *Touchstone ;* April 6, a revival of the 'Queen's Shilling,' and 'A Quiet Rubber'—Mr. Hare, *Lord Kildare ;* June 11, a revival of the 'Money-Spinner,' and S. Theyre Smith's 'Castaways'—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, *Julian Larkspur* and *Lilian Selkirk ;* Oct. 31, 'Mayfair,' adapted by A. W. Pinero from Sardou's 'Maison neuve'—Mr and Mrs. Kendal, *Geoffrey* and *Agnes Roydant*, Mr. Hare, *Nicholas Barrable.*

1886 : Feb. 13, 'Antoinette Rigaud,' translated by Ernest Warren from the French of Raymond Deslandes—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, *Henri de Tourvel* and *Antoinette Rigaud*, Mr. Hare, *Général de Préfond ;* May 25, the 'Wife's Sacrifice,' adapted by Sydney Grundy and Sutherland Edwards from 'Martyre!'

by D'Ennery and Tarbé—Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, the *Count* and *Countess de Moray*, Mr. Hare, *Mr. Drake*.

Mrs. Kendal is an actress of rich endowment and rare accomplishment. In face and figure she is the ideal incarnation of generous English womanhood. Her beauty is one of expression rather than of form. It is the outward and visible sign of bodily and mental health, with nothing of the hectic nervousness or weird "intensity" which over-civilization has rendered fashionable for the moment. She has at her fingers' ends all the methods of modern comedy and drama, and thousands of play-goers, especially in the provinces, retain a grateful recollection of her performances in Shaksperean and eighteenth century comedy, with the old Haymarket Company. At the Haymarket, no doubt, there lingered many of the best traditions of the "palmy days"; but it may be doubted whether Mrs. Kendal ever fully acquired the especial arts of diction essential to the perfect delivery of Shaksperean poetry and even of Lyttonian rhetoric. It is a mistake to suppose that she is not a poetical actress. She can on occasion make poetry of commonplace modern prose, and the touching dignity of her *Monna Giovanna* in the 'Falcon' was a poem in itself. It is, however, in the expression of unsophisticated, unidealized, every day emotion that she chiefly excels. Her talent is so genuine that it acts as a sort of touchstone to the matter she is delivering, and fails her when brought into contact with pinchbeck sentiment and mere convention. She is never seen at her best in characters which afford no scope for her fresh and delicate humor. *Susan Hartley* in 'A Scrap of Paper,' *Kate Greville* in the

'Queen's Shilling,' *Susan* in 'William and Susan,' and *Kate Verity* in the 'Squire' are among her best performances—the two first-mentioned characters, though French in origin, having been thoroughly Anglicized. She has of late been condemned, unfortunately, to represent a number of the sickly sentimental heroines of third-rate French drama—characters in which she often shows great power, passion and pathos, but which afford no opportunity for the development of the finer and more characteristic phases of her talent.

The preponderance of French drama in the St. James's bills has also been to the disadvantage of Mr. Kendal, whose pathos is apt to ring rather false, while, as a light comedian, he has few rivals on the stage. His *Colonel Blake* in 'A Scrap of Paper' is an admirable piece of acting; as is his *Frank Maitland* in the 'Queen's Shilling,' where he rises in the last act to genuine power and originality. These qualities, indeed, are seldom absent from any of his performances, but in the self-sacrificing lovers and histrionic husbands of French drama they are combined with a throaty and sing-song utterance and an exaggerated dignity of demeanor which shows that the actor is not at his ease. Mr. Kendal is much applauded by the public in the parts of brainless "swells" such as *Lord Kengussie* in the 'Money-Spinner' and *Captain Crichton* in 'Impulse.' In these he no doubt displays much comic power, but it is unjust to his talent to place them among his best performances. A nincompoop can play a nincompoop, but it takes a man of parts to play a man of parts, and this, when he has the chance, Mr. Kendal can do to admiration.

WILLIAM ARCHER.

Whether Mr. Tennyson's 'Falcon,' which resembles an ordinary drama as a bas-relief resembles a boldly-sculptured group, keep the stage or not, it has at least been the occasion of displaying with singular clearness the delicate as well as forcible talent of Mrs. Madge Robertson Kendal. There was the more need for an actress skilled in rendering the softer emotions, since *Monna Giovanna*, magnificent in her queenly robes, is an all too stately dame to move ordinary human hearts to their innermost depth. It is very doubtful whether in less skilful hands the Italian lady would inspire sympathy. She is too remote in her icy grandeur for common folk to care for, were it not that Mrs. Kendal invests the anxious mother with a tenderness peculiarly her own. Not for the first time has this admirable artist delineated a womanly woman; for it is her special faculty to give sweetness to her impersonations. It is perhaps not altogether surprising that a nature so highly gifted with sensibility should at the same time be keenly appreciative of every shade of humor. As great wit is said to be the near ally of madness, so is the soul accessible to pathos equally perceptive of fun. Much of the charm of Mrs. Kendal's acting in characters more suited to her talent than *Monna Giovanna* is due to the archness with which she contrives to invest them. Without sacrificing for an instant the serious interest of the situation, she contrives to indicate by a sparkle of the eye or the slightest movement of the lip that she sees what fools *Colonel Daunt* and *Dora's* unspeakable mother are making of themselves. This power of subtle indication, one of the most valuable of histrionic gifts, is in the case of Mrs. Kendal strength-

ened by a perfect expression of simplicity. The faculty of delineating that simplicity which reveals itself in tones, looks and gestures indicating surprise, is one of the highest accomplishments of an actress. Mrs. Kendal has both of these powers in perfection—the archness arising from a sort of astonished amusement at what is going on, and the equally telling air of absolute unconsciousness which characterizes such a personation as *Galatea*. It is true that an actress who makes her first appearance at the age of four has an advantage over those who commence their art at the mature age of eighteen or twenty, but neither critics nor public care for means. They look only at results, and see in Mrs. Kendal an actress who can make the pathetic and humorous chords vibrate in many keys. Her rendering of *Lilian Vavasour* is an excellent instance of this variable faculty of interweaving the serious fabric with bright threads of genuine comedy. In a minor degree her acting in the 'Queen's Shilling' exhibits her large emotional compass, but yet without betraying the fund of real dramatic power hidden behind the conventional quiet manner now in vogue. In *Dora* she is, however, quite another person, the *ingénue* of sad experience. Few will forget the exquisite *naïveté* of her astonishment when a legitimate proposal is made by the man she loves, or the sustained force of her acting in the later scenes. By no means so well known as her *Lilian Vavasour*, *Dora*, *Galatea* and *Selene*, is Mrs. Kendal's surprising performance in 'Black-Eyed Susan.' As *Susan* she has no reason for toning down emotion to tameness; but seizing the attention of her audience, holds them spell-bound, until with moist eyes

and husky throats they own the power of a perfect artist.

BERNARD HENRY BECKER, in the *Theatre*, February, 1880.

Mrs. Kendal (to return to the ladies whom we have left) is a thoroughly accomplished, business-like, lady-like actress, with a great deal of intelligence, a great deal of practice and a great deal of charm. She is not, we should say, highly imaginative, but she has always the manner of reality, and her reality is always graceful. At the St. James's she carries the weight of the whole feminine side of the house—she reigns alone; and it is a proof of the great value which in London attaches to a competent actress, once she is secured, that Mrs. Kendal does all sorts of business. Yesterday she was a young girl, of the period of white muslin and blushes; to-day she plays *Mrs. Sternhold*, in a revival of Tom Taylor's 'Still Waters.'

The *Century Magazine*, January, 1881.

Mrs. Kendal's position is unique. She has set her mark deep and broad on the contemporary stage—a mistress of sunny humor, and one whose pathetic expression comes from "out of the depths" indeed; the single actress of our time in England who, having done with a part all that critical shrewdness can desire, or popular fancy expect, knows at the right moment how to do that indescribable something more which makes critical shrewdness lose itself, and carries an audience off its feet.

FREDERICK WEDMORE, in the *Nineteenth Century*, February, 1883.

There is an inevitable tendency, even on the part of the admirers of a gifted actress, to dwell upon the past to the disadvantage of the present: to recall the youthful charm of earlier performances, and to undervalue the higher accomplishment of maturity. But those who would have us so judge of the art of Mrs. Kendal do her a wrong, for she was never so great as she is to-day. And never, it may be said, has the success of an actress been more amply deserved. Her whole career has been signalized by constant and earnest study, and by a steady and continuous advance. She has shown an unrivalled ability to learn all that can be taught, and an unfailing power to re-produce all that she has learnt. Her art is perhaps the highest expression of educated talent that is to be found upon our stage. If it has not the charm of genius, it is at least free from the anxieties and uncertainties of genius: our enjoyment of her acting is never harassed by any fear of failure, for her effects are always carefully planned and confidently executed; and in a weak play, or a weak company, she can sometimes take upon her own shoulders the whole weight and responsibility of a performance without flinching and without any evidence of fatigue. It must be confessed, however, that the actress's powers of endurance are sometimes sorely tried. There is a sort of superstition amongst dramatic authors, which I do not think is shared by the public, that Mrs. Kendal, like some modern Niobe, must be always in tears, and accordingly these gentlemen are apt to supply her with a fund of pathos, such as even the keenest appetite for sorrow could scarcely digest in a lifetime. As a matter of fact it is not under these conditions that the

finer qualities of her art are displayed to the highest advantage. She is at her best where strong feeling is kept in check by the need of action, and where the devotion of a loyal nature quickens a woman's wit and grants her courage and resource. She is at her best, in short, in such plays as the 'Ladies' Battle,' or the 'Sheep in Wolf's Clothing.' And yet in passion that belongs of right to the situation and to the character, and is not merely imported for the sake of effect—in the passion, for instance, of the great scene in the 'Money Spinner'—Mrs. Kendal can strike every note of feeling with power and conviction. She can give reality to the pathos that is true, and it is not altogether the fault of the actress if she fails to grant the same sense of illusion to a sickly sentimentalism that spends itself in tears.

J. COMYNS CARR, in the *Fortnightly Review*, Feb., 1883.

Mrs. Stirling and Mrs. Kendal are probably the only living English actresses who would not be out of place on the stage of the House of Molière—are, in other words, the only two in whose work the quality of art, as opposed to the quality of temperament, is abundant and complete enough to make them the fitting associates of players so consummate as Coquelin and Delaunay and Got, the not unworthy successors of artists so finished and so rare as Arnould Plessy and the sisters Brohan. The elder lady, as we know, is even now almost a tradition; she survives as an exemplar of culture and style; her influence must soon, by the very nature of things, become inactive and unpractical. Mrs. Kendal, however, is at the prime of

life and the top of authority; is in the plenitude of her gifts and at the acme of her accomplishment. For some years to come she must remain, as she is now, not merely a central figure of the English theatre, but, to those who are interested in acting pure and simple, not certainly the most natural and engaging, but assuredly the most finished and commanding representative of the art we have.

It is not that her endowment is faultless nor her practice altogether perfect. She has limitations, and outside these she is only interesting; in her composition there is an artificial strain which, masterly as her technical acquirements are, she has never succeeded in wholly dissembling for any considerable length of time. There are those, we believe, to whom her personality is, to say the least, not sympathetic; and there are those who can neither tolerate her intention nor admire her effect. She has mannerisms, of course; but they are habits rather of thought than of expression, they are the outcome, not so much of professional habits, as of a peculiar morality and a certain social position.

But within her limits—which, it must never be forgotten, are self-invented and self-imposed—what an artist she is! How carefully she constructs a part, and how consummately she executes! Voice, face, presence, habit, disposition—everything is turned to account; the personage is incarnate in the actress, is inseparable from the peculiar and special qualities of her peculiar and special individuality. And, then, what an accomplishment is hers! what sagacity in invention and composition, what a feeling for gesture, what variety in intonation! You hear and see; and

Mr. Irving's mystery becomes uninteresting, and Miss Terry gets to be no more than an inspired schoolgirl. Here is the artist; here the incarnation of histrionics, the very genius of the boards. When Mrs. Kendal is at her best—as in the 'Squire,' and the 'Money-Spinner,' and 'Mayfair'—she commands, not merely emotion, but an enthusiasm of respect. Her technique is so sober, yet so sufficient; her intonation so abundant, yet so chastened; her capacity so rich (within certain limits), yet so quick, so apprehensive, vigorous and persuasive, that you have no choice but surrender at discretion. Art is art, and Mrs. Kendal is an artist: there is no more to be said than that. You may wish that withal she might have touches of Rachel, hints of Ellen Terry, notes (even) of Sarah Bernhardt. But you end by admitting that Mrs. Kendal is herself, and that, being one of the faithful, you could spare her less than any luminary of the English stage.

W. E. HENLEY, in the *State*, April 17, 1886.

MME. MODJESKA.

There are four sisters known to mortals well,
Whose names are Joy and Sorrow, Death, and Love:
This last it was who did my footsteps move
To where the other deep-eyed sisters dwell.
To-night, or ere yon painted curtain fell,
These, one by one, before my eyes did rove
Through the brave mimic world that Shakspere wove.
Lady! thy art, thy passion were the spell
That held me, and still holds; for thou dost show,
With those most high each in his sovereign art,—
Shakspere supreme, and mighty Angelo,—
Great art and passion are one. Thine too the part
To prove, that still for him the laurels grow
Who reaches through the mind to pluck the heart.

RICHARD WATSON GILDER.

MME. MODJESKA.

The life of Mme. Modjeska is quite as romantic and certainly as interesting as many of the plays in which she has appeared. There have been innumerable stories circulated about her early history that are not true, one being that she is the daughter of a Polish prince who cut her off with a shilling, or its Polish equivalent, because she chose the stage as a profession. No one laughs at these stories more heartily, or sooner corrects them, than Mme. Modjeska. Her father, Michael Opid, or Opido, was born among the mountains, but came to live at Cracow, in Austrian Poland, where Helena, or Helcia as she was called as a child, was born. Opido was a man of fine musical culture, and he taught music in Cracow, where his modest home was the rendezvous of all musicians and artists who came to the old capital. Helena was the last child born in a large family, and her father gave her a Greek name on account of her small Greek head, which pleased his artistic sense. Her father died when she was quite a child.

Mme. Modjeska took from her mother her great activity and energy, as well as her domestic quality, and from her father the profound devotion to art, and the abundant imagination, as well as the innate refinement, which are both such strong characteristics of the

Polish mountaineers of the Tatra mountains. The intense nature of the woman showed itself in the child. She was intelligent, imaginative, and industrious, and while she enjoyed above all things hearing the poems of Homer read aloud she was interested in domestic pursuits, and she attributes her physical strength at this day to the exercise she took as a child, breaking the loaf sugar for the family consumption, and polishing the mahogany furniture until it reflected her fair young face in its blood-red surface. Helena was seven years of age when she was taken, for the first time, to see a tragedy. One can imagine the effect of this enchanting moment upon a susceptible nature such as hers. Her excitement was so intense that her mother declared that it should be many a long year before Helena saw the inside of a theatre again, and seven years passed by before Helena again had the pleasure she coveted. In the meantime, however, she had not been without theatrical consolation. The children in the house rigged up a theatre of their own; but in the midst of their play they were recalled to the stern reality of life by a terrible fire which swept through Cracow, destroyed every vestige of their home, and reduced them to dire poverty, for the houses upon whose rental they depended for their income went with the rest. Half of the town was burned down. After sleeping about in cellars, clad with scanty raiment and fed with insufficient food, her mother, Mme. Benda, at last found a house that they might live out of the cold, but all who were able had to lend a helping hand, for there was a large family to clothe and feed. The youngest boy went to work with a mason and finally arose to the dignity of a professor of archi-

tecture. The oldest brother, Josef Benda, went on the stage and acted with success. The second brother, Felix Benda, did the same and became one of the foremost of Polish actors. A third son, Simon, went to study music at the conservatory in Vienna and has proved a successful professor of his art. Helena envied her actor brothers their profession, but before she was allowed to lend her aid toward the family support Mme. Benda insisted that she should get as good an education as their circumstances would permit, so she went to a convent every day. She learned little there but to recite, the good nuns remarking her talent and encouraging it by their words of praise. All Helena's thoughts were turned towards the stage and her reading, which was extensive, was in that direction. She determined that she would be an actress or—a nun, the latter, however, only because the prospect of being the former was so remote. The play that had the greatest effect upon her subsequent career was 'Hamlet,' which she saw acted by a German company. Hereafter Shakspere was the god of her idolatry, and Schiller and Gœthe, whom she had worshipped up to this time, were cast aside. Through the intervention of her brother Felix, Helena finally succeeded in her effort to go upon the stage. It was such a long and tedious struggle that she almost gave it up; for years passed by without any success. During one of these years her mother told her that she must marry her guardian, a friend of the family, and a man much older than herself. She had always understood that this was to be her fate, so she accepted it uncomplainingly. The name of this man was Modrzejewski, the

substitution of the letter A makes it feminine, and Modrzejewska is really the spelling of the name we have abbreviated to Modjeska. They were married quietly and Mme. Modjeska had one son, whose wedding a short time since in New York was a much more auspicious one than that of his mother to Modrzejewski. After her marriage Mme. Modjeska went to live at Bochnia, and there she made her first appearance on the stage with a company of amateurs. She at once attracted attention, and her husband, seeing her value to him as an actress, organized a small company and put her at the head of it. This little band met with great discouragements, and their struggles and hardships were enough to have nipped their ardor in the bud, but there were good actors in it, and they saw signs of fame, if not of fortune, before them, and they toiled on. Two of Mme. Modjeska's brothers were among its members, and a younger sister played small parts. The parts that Mme. Modjeska was called upon to play were as many and varied as those enumerated by the *Player King* in 'Hamlet'; but she was happy in their performance, for she was following the profession of her choice, and its privations and hardships seemed as nothing to her. She even had the discouragements of war to fight against, for the whole country was in mourning, and the unhappy Poles did not feel in the humor for enjoying theatrical performances. In 1863, her husband accepted for her a proposal to play German tragedy in Austrian Bukozina, but her patriotism got the better of her ambition, and she gave up the idea of playing in Germany on hearing a band play Polish national airs the day before the first performance.

It was at the time when the Polish insurrection broke out, and this music made her feel as if deserting the Polish stage for the German at such a moment, would be equal to betraying the national cause.

In 1865 Mme. Modjeska returned to Cracow, where her family lived and where her brother, Felix Benda, was acting. She got an engagement there to play *ingenue* parts, but the stage manager of the theatre, an old experienced actor, promoted Modjeska to play the leading parts. This artistic director, named I. S. Iasinski, was to Modjeska what *Michonnet* was to *Adrienne Lecouveur*—her only teacher and best friend on the stage. Her progress was remarkable; in a few months she was recognized as the queen of the Cracow theatre, and her fame spread over all Poland. While there she received from Germany and France several proposals to act. In 1867 M. Dumas *fils*, hearing such wonderful accounts of her performance, invited her to come to Paris and play *Marguerite Gautier* in his 'Dame aux Camélias,' as well as the leading parts in his other plays. She refused, determined, as she was then, to remain true to the national stage. She probably also did not consider her French sufficiently perfect for the undertaking, and furthermore she was deterred from going on the French stage by what she heard of stage life in Paris.

Mme. Modjeska's whole life then as now was in her art, and she studied and worked with the enthusiasm which is the accompaniment of genius. In June, 1866, she was playing in Posen, the capital of Prussian Poland, and there she was seen for the first time by Charles Bozenta Chlapowski, a young Polish patriot

and journalist, whose family had won distinction in its country's cause, and who were people of high social position. Mr. Chlapowski fell desperately in love with Mme. Modjeska the first time he saw her, and she with him, and that he pressed his suit with energy and determination those who know him best can best understand. Although in love with the young Pole, she declined his proposal of marriage at first and refused to consider it, until his family not only gave their consent to the alliance, but until they formally asked her if she would not marry Charles, who was breaking his young heart for her. She consented, and they were married, and a happier marriage it would be hard to find.

In September, 1868, on the day of her marriage, Madame Modjeska went to Warsaw, where she was invited by the president of the Imperial Theatre for a series of performances. This was the culminating point in her dramatic career, for the Imperial Theatre in Warsaw is a kind of Comedie-Française, and in fact the leading theatre not only of Poland but of Eastern Europe. Notwithstanding many obstacles put in her way, Modjeska took Warsaw by storm. Her triumph was the greatest ever known in the annals of the theatre, and henceforth she was accepted as the foremost representative of Polish dramatic art. After two months of continual ovations in Warsaw she returned to Cracow, where her husband was then the chief editor of a daily paper.

At the end of 1869 Mme. Modjeska and her husband left Cracow for good, and established themselves in Warsaw. She was engaged for life at the Imperial Theatre as the leading lady, and he in

a financial institution, as his political precedents excluded him from the possibilities of continuing his journalistic career under the Russian government. They remained in Warsaw until 1876—seven years. It was during that time that Mme. Modjeska advanced most in her art. The Warsaw Theatre is not a theatre of runs, but the bills change continually. So Mme. Modjeska played, besides her old parts, seven or eight new ones every year. It has been her ambition and her merit to introduce on the Warsaw stage the standard pieces of Shakspere, Gœthe, Schiller, Molière, and in the same time to bring on new plays of her native (Polish) literature. She was the soul of the theatre and the idol of the public, but, at the same time, the object of a great deal of envy. She had to sustain a continual struggle with the Russian Censorship, which claims authority over the selection of plays, and which always wants to exclude all plays in which there might be discovered any allusion to freedom and independence.

It was in Warsaw that she became the friend of a most distinguished woman, the wife of the president, General Muskanoff, herself best known in the European world as Mme. Calergi, who had a great affection for Mme. Modjeska and exerted a great influence upon her artistic development. It might be said that as Iasenski was her first guide into the dramatic realm, Mme. Calergi's hand led her up to those heights of art where poetry, thea tre, music, and the plastic arts appear all as one. There is no question that continual association with the highest minds of her country, poets, artists, political and society people—as well as the foremost

foreign artists who passed through Warsaw, helped Mme. Modjeska a great deal, and that the seeds of such a refining process did not fall on an ungrateful ground might be seen in the results which she attained. However, such a life of continual excitement, professional work, studies in all directions, and the turmoil of society, produced necessarily great exhaustion, and Mme. Modjeska paid for all mental gains by physical decline of health and strength. In 1870–1 she was prostrated by four months of an illness, which threatened to terminate fatally. This exhaustion on one side, and on the other the worry over several unpleasant attacks, caused by the envy of her colleagues and others,—worry which, thanks to her excitability, troubled her more than it ought to have done, decided her, in 1876, to leave the stage.

The death of her favorite brother Felix and of Mme. Calergi, had a great deal to do with this decision, so she concluded to act upon her doctor's advice and take a sea voyage. Her eyes were turned toward America, the land of the free, and so, with her husband and a party of friends, she sailed for the United States in 1876. After visiting the Centennial exhibition they went to California, where they thought to found a Polish community. One should hear the history of this experience as related by Mme. Modjeska, to appreciate fully its many phases. They bought land, built a house, purchased cattle, hens and chickens and other necessities, and then swung hammocks under the trees, laid in a stock of cigarettes and waited for the crops to grow and for the cattle to multiply. As long as the money held out they lived a delightful

life. Unfortunately there is a limit to money, and before very long it was all gone and the little colony had to turn to and work. This was too prosaic entirely for some of its members, and they continued to swing in the hammocks and smoke cigarettes while the others worked and waited upon them. One of the hardest workers was Mme. Modjeska. She not only cooked and scrubbed, but she milked the cows and made the butter, her husband and son doing all the hard work of the farm while their companions looked on and chaffed and sneered by turns. Even with the strictest economy they could not live, and Mme. Modjeska determined to learn English and act at a San Francisco theatre. She went to San Francisco, and in six months she spoke the English language well enough to act in it. The story of her first appearance on the English speaking stage has been often told. The late John McCullough gave her an opportunity at the California Theatre. Her first appearance there, in 1877, as in Warsaw, nine years before, was as *Adrienne Lecouvreur*. Her success was immediate. Henry Sargent, the manager, saw her and made a two years' contract with her, and since that time Mme. Modjeska has been claimed as an American actress. After her triumphs in the United States, Mme. Modjeska returned to Poland, where she was received with the characteristic enthusiasm of her countrymen. They forgave her for having left them in their joy at her return. The United States is, however, the country of Mme. Modjeska's adoption, and her husband and son are both naturalized citizens of the republic. Mr. Chlapowski has bought a ranch in the far west, and her son Ralph is married

and settled in Omaha, where he follows the profession of a civil-engineer.

Of Mme. Modjeska's acting I may say at once that I place it above that of any of her contemporaries in the same line, whom I have seen. It may not reach the tragic height of some, nor the comic depths of others, but there is an evenness in her performance that is very satisfying. Her art is the art of genius—genius that has not shirked work. It is a diamond that its owner has polished with infinite care, and it sparkles as brilliantly in the lurid light of tragedy as in the rainbow light of comedy. Intellectual, womanly, sympathetic—no wonder that Mme. Modjeska has as many admirers in America as in her native country, notwithstanding the fact that she is handicapped with a language not her own. Her art is so great, her charm so subtle, that we find nothing to criticise.

JEANNETTE LEONARD GILDER.

Madame Modjeska's first appearance as an English speaking actress, which took place in San Francisco, toward the close of 1877, was a remarkable event and one which made a deep impression on those who assisted at the occasion. It was memorable in itself, considered wholly apart from the results to which it led; it was in the nature of a surprise, so little was expected and so much was given.

We had had no dearth of ambitious foreign stars on the San Francisco boards, and by consequence, the title of Countess, which was used to give *eclat* to Modjeska's name on the bills, impressed us but little. Why, it was but shortly before that we had been called

on to pronounce judgment upon a princess — the Princess Racovitza, whose name scandal associated with the famous duel in which the socialist Lasalle lost his life—and our judgment, save as to the physical charms of the lady, had been far from favorable. I do not think I have heard anything of La Racovitza since. But Modjeska, who has not heard of her, and who can hear of her too often ?

Mr. Barton Hill was at that time manager of the California Theatre, acting for John McCullough, then absent on a starring tour in the Eastern States. We saw a very modest number of posters distributed about the city announcing that on such a date "Helena Modjeska, Countess Bozenta," would make her bow as *Adrienne Lecouvreur*. Hill could add little to the information afforded by the posters. She was a Polish countess and a distinguished European artist; we had heard all that before, and we thought of the Princess Racovitza and politely changed the subject.

It was emphatically an off week at the California Theatre, sandwiched in between the engagement of—I have forgotten what star, and Rose Eytinge. There was no interest excited by the Modjeska engagement; it attracted no attention whatever. Toward nine o'clock I strolled down to the California with a few friends—like myself, critics of the San Francisco press and brought thither rather by a sense of duty than by any anticipation of pleasure. The curtain fell on the first act just as we entered. There was not a hand. A colder, more unsympathetic audience I have never seen. To be sure there was very little of it and its members were scattered through the large auditorium like the plums in a charity pudding—within hailing

distance of each other. Modjeska, of course, had not yet appeared; *Adrienne* is not seen in the first act. She appears, however, early in the second, and a few minutes later a new star—as far as the English speaking stage is concerned—burst on the theatrical firmament.

She had a reception, such as it was. The usher-claque did its duty, and there was a grace in acknowledgment of the perfunctory applause which insensibly interested the audience. Then the play proceeded. As the first lines fell from her lips, tinged as they were by a strangely-marked foreign accent, the knowing ones shook their heads. But not for long. We soon saw that no ordinary artist was before us. We recognized and bowed to the charm that has swayed so many thousands since. The diminutive audience felt the spell, and a warm round of applause as the curtain fell attested the interest that the fair foreigner had awakened.

To be brief, each succeeding act was a culminating triumph, and I could not have believed that so small an audience could have manifested so great a volume of enthusiasm. And when the curtain fell for the last time the people remained in their seats—a rare compliment, indeed, for an American audience to pay—and summoned their new favorite again and again to receive their thanks and approval. The future of Modjeska on the Anglo-Saxon stage was assured.

Henry J. Sargent, at that time at San Francisco in charge of Heller, the magician, was one of those who came, saw, and was conquered that night, and his visit to the theatre resulted that same week in a contract under which Modjeska was introduced a

little later to eastern audiences—we all know with what result.

The California Theatre was crowded nightly the remainder of the engagement. The press, perhaps a little carried away by the contagious enthusiasm, could not find adjectives superlative enough to praise the new star. Miss Eytinge sacrificed the first week of her engagement that that of Modjeska might be prolonged beyond its original modest limits ; and finally the new foreign star, no longer a stranger, departed for New York amidst the brightest auguries, which have been most happily fulfilled.

GEO. H. JESSOP, in a private letter to the Editors of this book.

"Thus Fate knocks at the door," said Beethoven of the opening chords of the Fifth Symphony. It is the imminence of Fate that gives solemnity to Modjeska's *Camille.* In the hands of such an actor the modern French play has the grace, the power, the impression of one of the old Greek tragedies.

R. W. GILDER, in *Scribner's Monthly*, May, 1878.

Her *Viola*, a part to which she is yet new, promises to become a fit companion picture to her *Rosalind.* The distinction between the two characters is cleverly marked, and will, of course, grow more clear with future study and rehearsal. The sentimental side of *Viola* is projected into strong relief, and is treated with exquisite tenderness and grace. The key-note of the impersonation is given at the first entrance from the boat. At Booth's Theatre, this coast scene was a marvel of shabbiness and grotesque unfitness ; yet the actress, by her power of pantomime, created a vivid

impression of cold and storm, of suffering, fatigue, and fear. The natural timidity of woman was substituted for the high courage of *Rosalind*, and this phase of the character was emphasized throughout the play, and was made manifest even in the love scenes with *Olivia*, which were treated most picturesquely, in varying moods of bewilderment, incredulity, and raillery, but with a constant suggestion of the pain inflicted for love's sake by a loving heart upon itself. The performance, as has been intimated, is not yet a finished work. There are rough spots in it here and there, and there are traces of labor and uncertainty which only time will remove. But these flaws are only discernible at intervals, and never at important crises. The versatility of the actress is displayed in the contrast between the delicate pathos and unsurpassable grace of the famous scene between *Viola* and *Orsino* and the admirable humor of the duel scene with *Sir Andrew*, which excites the heartiest merriment without recourse to any methods except those which belong legitimately to comedy. These scenes contain the promise of the completed work.

J. RANKEN TOWSE, in the *Century*, November, 1883.

The return of Mme. Modjeska is a welcome event. This distinguished actress came forth last evening at the Star Theatre, in the character of *Camille*, and she was welcomed with affectionate interest by a numerous and sympathetic audience. Upon the sad and deplorable subject of this play there would seem to be no especial need for particular reflection. The topic as originally presented to the dramatic world was openly offensive; but in the lapse of years it has been sub-

jected to such ingenious intellectual manipulation that at last its essential character seems to have undergone a total change. This sorrowful heroine, at any rate, as presented by Mme. Modjeska is a good woman—in her essential innate fibre—whom malignant fate and wayward impulse have precipitated into a sinful life, and who is shown as vainly but pathetically striving, under the influence of a true love, to free herself from the inexorable consequences of her sin. When considered from this point of view the spectacle that is presented allures the attention of thoughtful observers to that great and sacred mystery, a woman's heart suffering under the blight of thwarted and baffled affection. In other words, the woman presented by Mme. Modjeska is not a courtesan struggling to reinstate herself in a domestic position and giving forth sonorous platitudes about the "charmed circle of Society." This actress from the first of her career upon the American stage has been remarkable for her power to express the passionate rapture with which true love looks upon the object of its adoration. With this power her performance, last night, was vital and beautiful. The outburst of despair, in the agonizing scene of the third act—when the tortured *Camille*, driven from her last refuge, cries out "Why do I live?"—remains, as it has ever been, one of the finest strokes of dramatic art that have been accomplished within the memory of the present generation. Mme. Modjeska, like Sarah Bernhardt, portrays the death of *Camille* without the taint of physical decay, and without the least association of the sick-room and the medicine-chest.

WILLIAM WINTER, in the *New York Tribune*, January 23, 1886.

Madame Modjeska proposed to give Shakspere translated from the original English into good Polish. The President agreed to this innovation, and Madame Modjeska arranged to play *Juliet* on her first benefit night. When she went to the assistant manager about it, he exclaimed: "Oh, my dear madame, it is impossible; it will not succeed. Plays that are *adapted from operas* never answer, I assure you!"

MABEL COLLINS: The 'Story of Helena Modjeska,' *p.* 132.

Deft hands called Chopin's music from the keys.
Silent she sat, her slender figure's poise
Flower-like and fine and full of lofty ease;
She heard her Poland's most consummate voice
From power to pathos falter, sink and change;
The music of her land, the wond'rous, high,
Utmost expression of its genius strange,—
Incarnate sadness breathed in melody.
Silent and thrilled she sat, her lovely face
Flushing and paling like a delicate rose
Shaken by summer winds from its repose
Softly this way and that, with tender grace,
Now touched by sun, now into shadow turned,—
While bright with kindred fire her deep eyes burned!

CELIA THAXTER, in *Scribner's Monthly*, May, 1878.

MISS CLARA MORRIS.

Touched by the fervor of her art,
No flaws to-night discover!
Her judge shall be the people's heart,
This western world her lover.
The secret given to her alone
No frigid schoolman taught her :—
Once more returning, dearer grown,
We greet thee, Passion's daughter!

EDMUND CLARENCE STEDMAN.



CLARA MORRIS.

Main

MISS CLARA MORRIS.

Though I think Clara Morris's career virtually dates from that September [13th] evening in 1870 when, an utterly unknown actress from "somewhere out West," she took the New York public by storm as the heroine of Wilkie Collins's 'Man and Wife,' it is, nevertheless, a fact that she had been for some years a recognized Leading Woman in such cities as Cleveland, Louisville, and Cincinnati, and had previously played every line of business, from smart soubrettes to tragedy queens, as occasion demanded. Reared in the hard school of a western theatre (the house managed by Mr. John Ellsler in Cleveland), Miss Morris, like *Claude Melnotte*, "rose from the ranks;" only the battalion where she graduated was the *corps du ballet*, which consisted of a limited number of western maidens, addicted to giggling, and to unlimited indulgence in chewing gum—a delicacy which figures largely in the now celebrated actress's vivacious imitations of herself as a newly-fledged *coryphée* in crudely colored tights and shoes much too big for her, shouldering a spear and, painfully rigid, keeping time to the inspiring strains of the 'Amazon's March.' Miss Morris's fund of personal anecdote embraces, likewise, a graphic description of her subsequent appearance as the *Queen Mother* to Edwin

Booth's *Hamlet*, at an emergency, and of her budding efforts during the engagements of such stars as Joseph Jefferson, Joseph Proctor ('Nick of the Woods') and Mr. Couldock, who was at that period accustomed to appear in the 'Willow Copse.' Now and then she went "barn-storming," and her vagabondage furnishes material for many an anecdote to which she gives the spice of her essentially individual style. Her description of this nomadic existence in "one-night towns," and of the types of character, from a gormandizing old woman to a shiftless comedian, she was associated with in the company, might have enlisted the pencil of a Hogarth, or the pen of a George Sand. The poor young girl, always an invalid, endowed with a passionate love of nature, a keen appreciation of the beautiful, a sense of the ridiculous rarely united to such a sensitive organization, devoured every romance that she could lay her hands upon, made an idol of Charles Dickens, and lived in daily companionship with the creations of his fancy. A poor untutored young girl, growing up like a neglected weed, a strange mixture of sentiment and humor; such was Clara Morris in her teens.

Though her early days are associated with Cleveland, the town in which she made her *début*, she was born in Ontario, Canada. The fact that she came into the world in the Queen's Dominions does not make her any the less, in the more restricted sense of the word, an American actress. She is American to the finger-tips and, in spite of years of metropolitan life, retains the refreshing simplicity of a Western woman. Should she attempt to be anything else she

would half destroy an interesting individuality. It is, however, scarcely likely that she will ever yield to the pernicious influence of a fashion of the hour, since one of Miss Morris's chief merits as a woman is that she is not ashamed of her humble origin and formerly limited education; and it is her crowning virtue that she has never failed practically to remember the benefactors of her youthful days. Visitors to her home on the Hudson River, "The Pines," at Riverdale, have often met a pleasant-mannered, well-spoken woman of middle age, attired in deep mourning, who is in the habit of paying periodical visits to her former protegée, who calls her by a familiar household name, and lavishes every attention upon her. "When I was a little girl, a kid, she always used to give us a home when mamma was out of work; we used to descend upon her, bag and baggage, at intervals, and I can see mamma dragging me and my bundle along as we came into ———'s front yard. I was a sensitive child, and always uncertain of my reception, though I had no reason to be, for we always met with a warm welcome." Clara Morris had attained comparative independence, however, long before she faced a New York audience, and not a few of the stars with whom she had acted brought word of her achievements to the metropolis. "There is a woman in Cleveland," said McKee Rankin to D. H. Harkins, on the eve of the production of the drama of 'Foul Play' at a house then known as the Broadway Theatre; "she's the greatest actress in this country; telegraph for her; she is sure to make a hit." The dispatch was sent, but an answer came back that it was impossible for Miss Morris to accept, as she had already signed

for Cincinnati. Finally, however, Mr. Augustin Daly, who was then managing the theatre first known as the Fifth Avenue, acted on a suggestion of Mr. James Lewis's and engaged Clara Morris, not as leading lady, but to play such characters as *Mrs. Glenarm* in 'Man and Wife,' then on the eve of production. Chance favored Miss Morris, however; Miss Agnes Ethel, then Mr. Daly's representative of sentimental heroines, declined to appear as *Anne Sylvester*, and Miss Ione Burke, who was the next actress in rank, had gone for her holiday and omitted to leave her address. In this emergency, Mr. Daly concluded to confide the character to "the raw Western recruit," whose physiognomy and bearing had impressed him as significant of force of character, and to cast Miss Linda Dietz for *Mrs. Glenarm*. Accustomed to quick study, Clara Morris did not delay the production an hour; she was in an agony of nervous apprehension, but steeled herself for an occasion which she felt would be momentous. Such indeed it proved, for her success established her in the historic "one bound" as leading lady of a metropolitan theatre: in spite of the fact that the critics and the public found her "crude" and full of "provincialisms," they were quick to acknowledge her rare gifts of temperament. Little by little this complaint was modified as she appeared in a round of characters with a success that fluctuated with her opportunities and the character of the parts assigned her. The fiery, impassioned nature of the heroine of 'Jezebel' [March 28, 1871] found a strong exposition; and, if she lacked something of the elegance, she had all the gift of tears, for *Fanny* in Mr. Daly's popular play of

'Divorce' [Sept. 5, 1871]. In certain old comedies she was less happy, but Bronson Howard's play of 'Diamonds' [Sept. 3, 1872] was remarkable not only as the medium for Miss Sara Jewett's first appearance on the stage in the character of the sentimental heroine, but for the fact that Clara Morris united with Miss Fanny Davenport in playing a brace of comedy romps, madcap girls bent on frolic. It is a strange fact that Miss Morris, whose disposition off the stage would seem to favor fun and mirth, excels before the footlights in depicting the heroines of domestic tragedy.

It was at the old Fifth Avenue Theatre that Clara Morris made her first great hit in a part which remains one of her greatest assumptions, *Cora* in 'L'Article 47' [April 2, 1872]. The impression which she produced in the mad scene on the first night is a memorable one. The actress had made a study of insanity both in asylums and medical books. She had practised falls such as had never been accomplished before, and she had thoroughly thought out what she should do during a long period while she was required to occupy the stage with very little to say but a great deal to suggest. She has since marvellously elaborated this episode, but the remembrance of her acting on that first night years ago, acting that made the blood run cold, remains uneffaced. She was dressed in a Spanish-looking gown of yellow satin, with red roses at the corsage, and had put on jet black tresses over her brown hair; a black lace veil concealed the wound supposed to have been inflicted on *Cora's* face by *Georges Duhamel*, her lover. She paced the floor like a caged animal, then sat and chattered half-incoherent sentences. The approach

of delirious madness was indicated with exceeding subtlety, and the scream and final fall electrified the house. When Augustin Daly, who had watched her from the wings, the most nervous of managers, his face colorless, his coat collar turned up, rushed forward to raise her to her feet and overwhelm her with praises, he found her half-insensible, and discovered that she had flung herself with such abandon to the ground that her bracelets had cut into her wrists and made them bleed. Her *Cora* was the sensation of the day, and she was acknowledged a great actress of the school termed emotional. There was, however, a hue and cry raised over "the adulterous drama from the French," and it was asserted in some quarters that it was strange and regrettable, not that she did *Cora* so well, but that she should do it at all.

No such objection could be made, however, to her *Alixe* [Jan. 21, 1873], following an interim in which her talents were devoted to the portrayal of the —to her—ungrateful character of *Magdalen* in 'False Shame; or New Year's Eve' [Dec. 21, 1872], the run of which was interrupted by the destruction of the Fifth Avenue Theatre by fire, on New Year's Day, 1873. Mr. Daly reassembled his company at the Broadway Theatre (opposite the New York Hotel, on the site of what was afterward Messrs. Harrigan & Hart's Theatre Comique), and preceded the first performance of 'Alixe' by a prologue prepared for the occasion by the late John Brougham. As each favorite advanced to the footlights to speak his or her share the audience gave cordial greeting; but when Clara Morris, very simply dressed, stepped forward, the house came down. She was, indeed, the

particular star of a famous company, and there was but little exaggeration in the statement, made not long after, that she held the heart of the New York public in her hand. On the same night her assumption of the simple trusting girl, *Alixe*, with the rose at her throat, in Mr. Daly's adaptation of the 'Comtesse de Somerive,' created a furore, and, as the character was unfolded and its impassioned depths of jealousy and despair were touched, the whole audience was in tears and raptures. The next day's newspapers complimented the actress on her triumph as so pure a personage. While at this theatre Clara Morris made a powerful impression in an unhealthy drama known as 'Madelein Morel' [May 20, 1873]. The curse scene, wherein a nun who is pictured as a repentant Magdalen, calls down the wrath of heaven upon her false lover, was treated with her wonted magnetism. Miss Morris had now virtually become a star, and few persons were surprised to hear that she had severed her connection with Mr. Daly's company during a tour of the country, or to see her announced to play a special engagement at the Union Square Theatre, where, in November [17th, 1873], she came forward as the heroine of Mr. W. S. Gilbert's fairy comedy of the 'Wicked World.' Her reception was most enthusiastic, but the play did not hold the boards for any length of time, and Miss Morris departed on her first starring tour. She returned, however, to this house in the spring, when the long run of 'Led Astray' was succeeded by an engagement during which she appeared with extraordinary success as *Camille* [May 14, 1874], a part which she had only acted on one occasion before [March 16, 1874], *i. e.*,

at a benefit performance given at the house in Fourteenth Street.

The Union Square Theatre has since proved a consistently lucky house for her. There it was [Nov. 20, 1876] that she embarked upon an assumption which she subsequently chose for her introduction to the Boston public, and which she would probably always select for a first appearance in any important town, *Miss Multon* in the drama of that name, adapted from the French. It was in this character that she fully re-established her metropolitan prestige after quasi-failures at other houses than at the Union Square Theatre, viz., Booth's Theatre, where she had the unhappy idea of essaying *Evadne* [May 10, 1875], *Lady Macbeth* [May 15, 1875], and *Jane Shore* [May 22], and Daly's New Fifth Avenue Theatre, where she appeared as *Leah the Forsaken* [Nov. 22, 1875] in the drama associated with the name of Miss Bateman. Indeed, Miss Morris's repeated reappearances under Mr. Daly's management have not been fortunate, for *Denise* was no more of a triumph, save for the actress's power of making an essentially French situation almost acceptable, than was the new *Leah*. At various periods Miss Morris has played engagements at most of the leading New York theatres, yet her name will always be chiefly associated with Mr. Daly's old Fifth Avenue Theatre in Twenty-Fourth Street, and with the Union Square Theatre, where, besides *Miss Multon* and *Camille*, she re-created for New York play-goers the heroine of Messrs. Magnus and Lancaster's play of 'Conscience' [March, 1881] and *Mercy Merrick* in the 'New Magdalen' [January, 1882]. The only other part with which she has

succeeded in identifying herself is *Jane Eyre* [February, 11, 1878], in passages of which she is extremely fine, notably the young girl's impassioned outburst in the prologue. Though for some years Clara Morris was little known, save as a great name, outside of a few cities, she is now a familiar figure to the audiences of San Francisco and New Orleans, and has journeyed from Wisconsin to Texas, from Maine to the Golden Gate.

Great and deserved as is her reputation, she is no more exempt than are those two other representative actresses, Sarah Bernhardt in Paris and Mrs. Kendal in London—one so essentially French, the other so radically English, from belittling criticism: like the lamented Aimee Desclée, who, too, was a high priestess of nature in art, Clara Morris's fame, after death, will doubless transcend her reputation with her own country people while living. It will then be realized with what inimitable truth and power she has pictured for us certain phases of human nature, and what unequalled feeling and passion she has brought to bear upon the characters into which she breathes the breath of life. It is a sure proof of an actress's supremacy when she succeeds in making certain personages so peculiarly her own that the spectator would not care to see them essayed by any one else; who, for instance, would accept another *Miss Multon*, another *Cora*, another *Alixe*, or, in certain scenes, such as the fourth act, even another *Camille?* During the period of Clara Morris's earlier triumphs she unknowingly founded a school yclept "the emotional"; the sincere flattery of the budding *débutantes* extended so far as to excite the risibilities of

audiences on more than one occasion. The model's faults were copied as though they had been virtues, and because Clara Morris said "Parus" the newly-fledged "emotionals" said "Parus" too, forgetting that they had not the sacred fire which shone so bright in her assumption as to make provincialisms of western speech but poor flickering flames scarcely worthy of regard. Of late years, Clara Morris has made a great advance in refinement, though she does not ape the manners of a *grande dame*. She has studied hard, observed much, mixed in polite society, and recognizing deficiencies that are as spots on the sun, has endeavored to correct them. Her features recall those of Rose Chéri to students of the stage who remember that celebrity of the Gymnase Theatre; the mobility of the face is extraordinary, and the clear, full eye is employed with a significance in which few actors can equal her. Her voice is capable of tones that go straight to the heart, and is used with a skill which only those who have studied her acting closely can detect.

Clara Morris is eminently a natural actress, and this ever-apparent spontaneity has more than once been taken by people who jump to conclusions as a proof that she trusts to the inspiration of the moment and improvises her effects; such, however, is not the case, and I venture to say that though Clara Morris seldom acts at rehearsals—"Only foreigners can do that," she says, "the garish light of day in a theatre makes me ashamed!"—no actress more carefully prepares every inflection of the voice and every stage and climax of the character. Hers is the art that conceals art, and has prompted a poet-critic, Mr. George Edgar Montgomery, to write:

The actress and the woman! I have sought
To draw the line between them, but in vain,
For, like two loves, they burn and throb as one;
Her thought is but the essence of all thought,
Her anguish is the echo of our pain,
Her heart and ours beat in deep unison.

These lines admirably express the universality of Clara Morris's genius and, what may be called, with due reservation, the familiarity of her style. She seems, in depicting one of those women who have sinned and suffered, to appeal to each one of the audience that she holds under the spell of her intense sympathy with the loves and griefs of her heroine. Her acting seems to embody little unremembered acts of kindness and of love; as *Camille*, parting, with the weight of self-sacrifice at her heart, from the man who "shone upon her like a star," as *Miss Multon*, fondling her unsuspecting children, Clara Morris touches with infinite tenderness a chord in the heart of every woman who has ever loved, of every mother who has dreamed of separation from her little ones, and even affects with her strange spell critics who rail against her deficiencies. The voice of nature speaks through this strange woman, and those who refuse to listen to it must indeed be insensible. Clara Morris has herself given an interesting account of the process of acting, and throws some light upon a question discussed again and again from the days of Diderot, and, notably, in our own time by Henry Irving and Coquelin the elder. "The same words, of course, become mechanical, so far as mere speech goes. I open my mouth and they naturally troop forth; yet I feel the part, and, if I did not, my audience would not, either.

There must seem to be tears not only in my eyes but in my voice. In order to obtain the right mood, after the part has become so familiar that the woes of the personage cease to affect me, I am obliged to resort to outside influences; that is, I indulge in the luxury of grief by thinking over somebody else's woes, and, when everything else fails, I think that I am dead, and then I cry for myself! There are, when I am on the stage, three separate currents of thought in my mind; one in which I am keenly alive to Clara Morris, to all the details of the play, to the other actors and how they act and to the audience; another about the play and the character I represent; and, finally, the thought that really gives me stimulus for acting. For instance, when I repeat such and such a line it fits like words to music to this under thought which may be of some dead friend, of a story of Bret Harte's, of a poem, or may be even some pathetic scrap from a newspaper. As to really losing one's self in a part, that will not do: it is worse to be too sympathetic than to have too much art. I must cry in my emotional *rôles* and feel enough to cry, but I must not allow myself to become so affected as to mumble my words, to redden my nose, or to become hysterical."

This singularly graphic personal statement will help us to understand how it is that Clara Morris is essentially a modern actress and why it is that, despite her abundant power, she has deprived certain characters, such as *Lady Macbeth*, of what may be called tragic elevation and given them a contemporaneous coloring which has brought upon her head the reproach of "unshaksperean." Even *Evadne* and *Jane*

Shore were converted into incongruous women of the present day; it was as though these personages had been suddenly projected into a modern street amongst the men and women of the hour. But it is no reproach to an actress to say that her *genre* is restricted to one school when, as in the case of Clara Morris, she stands incomparable and alone. Though Miss Morris's creative period is probably over, she will always be able to find harmonious types of character; and play-goers who saw her as the heroine of the 'Morte Civile' with Salvini at Booth's Theatre will recall with what a sense of symmetry she embodied a personage which, while affording her no opportunity for the stormy scenes of passion in which she excels, moves in those grooves happily fitted to her sympathetic talent. Inspired by the presence of the great tragedian, she played with unfailing care throughout, and left a highly memorable impression. In certain colloquial passages of her great characters, Clara Morris is apt, except on extraordinary occasions, to save herself with a view to the more important scenes, such as the mad episode of 'L'Article 47,' or the last acts of 'Miss Multon' and 'Camille.' While it may be said of her performance of the Anglicized *Marguerite Gauthier* that it lacks some of the significant details with which one or two other famous representatives of the part have embellished the earlier scenes, there can be no question that in point of electric power—and this is particularly the case in the fourth act—it remains incomparably eloquent. Most *Camilles* are overshadowed here by the *Armand*, not so hers; the spectator cannot help fixing his attention upon that pale face, over which one emotion

chases another as swift and changing as the winds. The frail figure in a dress which is worn with significant carelessness sways like a reed in the agony of endurance and no tones were ever more poignant than those that cry: "I would give a whole eternity of life for one short hour of such bliss as you have pictured now; but it cannot be, it cannot be!"

In view of Clara Morris's peculiar success in making the personages of the French drama her own, and the keen sympathy of her impressionable temperament with the works of Alexandre Dumas and other creative authors, it has often impressed her admirers with regret that some one of the masters of the Paris stage has not been influenced by her work—as was Dumas *fils* by that of Desclée — and confided to her types which no one could realize so well. Unfortunately for her art, however, Clara Morris is not a *Parisienne*, nor is the American dramatist sufficiently developed and individualized to found a national school with this strange actress as its priestess. There has recently arisen in Paris a star, Jane Harding by name, whose physiognomy strikingly recalls that of Clara Morris, but who lacks our country-woman's originality and is, if one may judge by her performances thus far, totally destitute of that quality, freely translated from *feu sacré* into "magnetism," which distinguishes the work of the American actress.

CLINTON STUART.

The hero of the new play produced at the Fifth Avenue Theatre last night has been convicted for a crime of which he was innocent, has been sentenced to eight years' imprisonment, has served out his term and has returned to Paris, where he again enters society and marries. His secret is kept faithfully by his mother and a few devoted friends ; but it is known to a fearful woman whom he formerly loved, whom he attempted to kill, but only disfigured for life. She obliges him on threats of disclosure, to visit her house and to gamble. This character is a strong one, and Miss Clara Morris shows in its personation a superb power such as none of her warmest admirers had given her credit for. In the mad-scene the terrible intensity of her acting completely carries away the audience ; and she won last night the most enthusiastic recognition of her ability from those present. Indeed, this performance places Miss Morris on a higher plane as an emotional actress than she has ever occupied before.

New York Evening Post, April 3, 1872.

The heroine of the drama is *Alixe*, which was acted by Miss Clara Morris. Fresh in its beauty, intense in its emotion, and gradually built up from the first timid consciousness of love to the full-orbed passion,—and that in trial, suffering, and convulsive struggle with itself and with circumstances,—this personation was one of the best pieces of nature, interpreted by art, that we have seen. The panther-like gleams with which Miss Morris likes to fleck her performances are not always to be approved ; but they were in perfect keeping with the emotion of this character ; and what we saw was—

what we have not hitherto seen upon the stage—an adequate and superb revelation of woman's passionate love.

WILLIAM WINTER, in the *New York Tribune*, Jan. 22, 1873.

The pathos of Miss Morris, unlike the pathos of Salvini, is supremely true. It is not tearfulness: it is heart-break. It is something which comes from the temperament of the woman, which cannot be simulated, and which is seldom felt in acting. Miss Morris's peculiar and profound power—profound within its limitations, is not approached to-day in acting. To call her acting hysterical and sensational, as it is called by some sage persons, is mere fatuity. Her acting is human, human in its representation of emotional and extreme nature. Miss Morris performed the character of *Rosalie* ['La Morte Civile'] with strong vibratory earnestness, and her pathos moved the audience deeply.

GEORGE EDGAR MONTGOMERY, in the *New York Times*, April 17, 1883.

MR. JOHN T. RAYMOND.

"There's millions in it!"—words devoid of wit;
But loud the laugh from gallery and pit
When Raymond gives them speculative tone,
And clothes them with a humor all his own.
Sellers gleams faintly on the printed page,
As drawn by Clemens in the 'Gilded Age,'
But dominates, in Raymond, all the stage.
Long may we live to see before us stand
That humorous figure with uplifted hand!

WILLIAM L. KEESE.

MR. JOHN T. RAYMOND.

A man who, in the eighth decade of the nineteenth century, has succeeded in treating the play-going world to something new, may be regarded as a public benefactor. Yet it is by no means on his *Colonel Sellers* that Raymond should rest his highest claims to distinction. As *Sellers*, it is true, he reaped the richest reward of his labors and attained the greatest vogue that any comedian of his day has known; but long before the visionary colonel had been evolved by Mark Twain's sketch, Raymond had done good, telling work in many lines and had made a fairly deep impression on the stage of his day.

John T. Raymond was born at Buffalo, N. Y., April 5, 1836. He was intended for mercantile pursuits, and at quite an early age might have been found at his desk in a produce commission house, where we may suppose him to have become more or less conversant with the fluctuations of the corn market and the value of potatoes. As time went on, the desk saw him less and less frequently, and after June 27, 1853—a memorable date in Mr. Raymond's career—it never saw him again. The Rochester Theatre, on that night, billed the 'Honeymoon' as the attraction, and John T. Raymond made his first appearance on any stage as *Lopez*. He speaks of his

début as the most pitiable instance of stage-fright imaginable. He lost his lines, his position, his presence of mind, and floundered through his part as gracefully, to quote his own words, "as a pig on stilts." The audience, however, would seem to have been kind to the young aspirant; perhaps the *vis comica* was apparent through all the awkwardness of a first appearance; be that as it may, the house, which would have laughed at another, laughed with him, and, in spite of his nervousness, he made a distinctly favorable impression. A season at the Rochester Theatre, with a constant succession of new parts, cured him of his stage-fright and gave him some little experience. Equipped with this he left "the provinces," and appeared at Niblo's Garden, New York, in the support of Anna Cora Mowatt, who was playing a farewell engagement as *Parthenia*. For three years the young actor steadily pursued his profession, principally in New England and the Southern States, playing as a rule subordinate parts, but steadily extending his experience and gaining recognition in the ranks of the profession.

In 1858 Raymond associated himself with E. A. Sothern, and in the following season made his first emphatic and distinctive hit as *Asa Trenchard*, in 'Our American Cousin.' He fairly divided the honors with *Dundreary* himself, and when Laura Keene revived the piece in New York in 1861, Raymond was specially engaged for the part. There are many theatre-goers of those ante-bellum days left who recall with pleasure that performance. As a matter of fact, the portrayal of American humor—nay more, American character, has always been Ray-

mond's strong point, and *Asa Trenchard* is, artistically speaking, one of the best pieces of work this gifted comedian has ever done. This part was the first which raised him at once, in the estimation of both native and foreign critics, to the position which he still holds, of the most distinctively American comedian on the stage to-day. In 1867 he crossed the Atlantic and joined Sothern, who was then playing *Lord Dundreary* at the Haymarket. Raymond's performance of *Asa Trenchard* was a revelation to the London critics, but they were not slow to recognize its merit and its truthfulness to nature. Buckstone had already made quite a hit in the part, dressing it like the Yankee of the comic caricatures, and playing it with all the "tall talkativeness" which old England has, from time immemorial, accepted as the most salient characteristic of New England. London now saw, almost for the first time, a genuine American character, represented by a competent American actor; and Raymond's success was assured. The piece was susbequently produced at the Théatre des Italiens, Paris where Raymond duplicated his London triumph. After a return engagement at the Haymarket and a starring tour in the British provinces, Raymond returned to the United States and he soon afterwards joined the stock company of the California Theatre, San Francisco, under the management of Messrs. Barrett and McCullough, where he appeared as *Graves* in 'Money,' Jan. 1869, when that famous theatre was first opened to the public. It was in San Francisco, though not on this occasion, that Mr. Raymond was fortunate enough to secure the 'Gilded Age,' a play which has made a fortune for

both actor and author. However, before that lucky find, he had many vicissitudes to go through, both as stock actor and as moderately successful star. It was on the occasion of his second visit to San Francisco that an adaptation of Mark Twain's 'Gilded Age' was submitted to him by Mr. George Dinsmore of the San Francisco *Evening Bulletin.* The character of *Colonel Sellers* caught the comedian's fancy at once; he felt that there were "millions in it," and after some correspondence with Mark Twain he succeeded in arranging terms, and the 'Gilded Age' was presented for the first time on any stage at the California Theatre late in the season of 1873. Its success was instantaneous, and has proved wonderfully enduring. In *Colonel Mulberry Sellers* he has a character after his own heart, a character so closely resembling his own frank, buoyant, sanguine disposition that it is difficult to tell where art ceases and where nature commences. Anyone who is acquainted with John T. Raymond in private life cannot have failed to detect in him the sanguine, glowing enthusiasm, the boundless faith in the future, the intense, vivid, boyish hopefulness which, enlarged and caricatured for stage effect, amuse us in *Colonel Sellers.* Those who have only formed the actor's acquaintance since the date of his great success are apt to think that he has caught the infection from the part he has played so long; those who knew him in his earlier days know that *Colonel Sellers* existed before Mark Twain had left the Mississippi, and that the author had only created a shell into which Raymond infused his vigorous and glowing individuality, animating it into bustling, scheming life.

But, like many a greater actor and many a lesser one, Raymond's foible has been "to cast himself out of his line." Was there ever a *Gravedigger* who did not aspire to play *Hamlet*? Was there ever a *Poor Tom* who did not fancy himself as *King Lear*? Raymond, while the most popular comedian on the American stage, was always consumed with a desire to play pathetic parts, and when the popularity of *Sellers* began to wane—which was not till many seasons' use blunted the edge of the novelty of this most original character—John T. Raymond attempted to find successors to the genial *Colonel* in such parts as the *Schoolmaster*, in the 'Sleepy Hollow' legend, and as a lachrymose father in a piece called 'My Son.' Both these attempts were short-lived, and he returned to the field in which he had won his earlier successes. As *Major Bob Belter*, of 'In Paradise,' a play written for him by Jessop and Gill, and first produced in Louisville in November, 1882, he measurably renewed his earlier triumphs; and later still, Lloyd's 'For Congress' proved a profitable vehicle for the comedian's talents. But *Colonel Sellers* is not dead yet, and from time to time a revival of the 'Gilded Age' can fill a theatre still.

There is no one but wishes Raymond well, and hopes he may soon secure a worthy successor to his famous visionary colonel. He is one of the most popular men in the profession, and even off the stage, one of the most amusing. A peculiarity of his—for surely we may reckon it a peculiarity in an actor of the present day—is, that he never uses tobacco in any form. As *Major Bob Belter*, the part demanded at one time that he should light a cigar. Here was a serious

difficulty. Raymond suggested: "Well, if I can't smoke I can spit, and they'll think I'm chewing." However, that would not answer, and the dilemma had to be evaded in some other way. Raymond is a warm friend, which is a merit that but few have an opportunity to appreciate. He is an excessively amusing companion, as all who have ever met him can testify. He has a fund of amusing anecdotes, mostly connected with his profession, and is an excellent *raconteur*. He enjoys a joke keenly, the more practical the better. He is, emphatically, a general favorite. He will live in the history of the stage principally as an exponent of the broader phases of American humor. His *Colonel Sellers* was a creation, and a creation more original in conception and more perfect in detail is not given more than a few times in each century. The names of Raymond and *Sellers* will be convertible terms for many a year to come, and it is to be regretted that so admirable a picture as the old colonel was not relieved by a better background than is supplied by the play of the 'Gilded Age,' which has only lived so long through and because of *Sellers*.

GEO. H. JESSOP.

Whoever failed to see Mr. Raymond in Mr. Clemens's (Mark Twain's) play of the 'Gilded Age,' during the recent season at the Globe Theatre, missed a great pleasure. In this drama a player last year almost unknown takes rank at once with the masters of his art, and adds another to the group of realistic actors whom we shall be slow to believe less fine than

the finest who have charmed the theatre-going world. One must hereafter name Mr. John T. Raymond in *Colonel Sellers* with Sothern in *Lord Dundreary*, with Jefferson in *Rip Van Winkle*, with Salvini in the 'Morte Civile,' or with Fechter as *Hamlet*. Like them he does not merely represent; he becomes, he impersonates, the character he plays. The effect is instant; he is almost never Raymond from the moment he steps upon the stage till he leaves it. His assumption of *Sellers* is so perfect that at some regrettable points where *Colonel Sellers* pushes matters a little beyond (as where he comments to *Laura Hawkins* on the beauty of the speech her attorney is making in her defense), we found ourselves wishing that *Sellers*—not Mr. Raymond—would not overdo it in that way. . . . . Mr. Raymond nicely indicates the shades of the author's intention in his *Sellers*, and so delicately distinguishes between him and the vulgar, selfish speculator, that it is with a sort of remorse one laughs at his dire poverty in the scene where the door drops from the stove and betrays the lighted candle which had imparted a ruddy glow and an apparent warmth from within; or again where he makes his friend stay to dine on turnips and water, having first assured himself from his dismayed wife that the water is *good*. The warm, caressing, affectionate nature of the man charms you in Mr. Raymond's performance, and any one who felt the worth of his worthlessness in the novel will feel it the more in the play. It is a personality rarely imagined by the author and interpreted without loss by the actor.

W. D. HOWELLS, in the *Atlantic Monthly*, June, 1875.

Colonel Mulberry Sellers had taken part in the recent unpleasantness; he was on the defeated side, but magnanimously resolving to let by-gones be by-gones, he soon determined "to go in for the OLD FLAG !—and an appropriation." *Colonel Sellers* is a gentleman of magnificent vistas. He sees vast avenues of wealth opened to him on all sides by his ever alert invention, and, in the meantime, is as poor as a church mouse. But no poverty can dull the edge of his quick-set intellect. If his steamboat scheme fails, he takes up a corn speculation; he sees "millions in it"; and if that flags he can fall back on hogs—and feed the corn to them. He has an unbounded faith in himself, a faith which most of his associates needs must share, despite his frequent mishaps and miscalculations. Now there was in this character something which exactly fell in with the times, and it was small wonder as soon as the novel of Messrs. Clemens and Warner was issued, that an enterprising play-maker sought to set the sanguine *Sellers* at once upon the stage. This first adaptation had the good luck to be bought by the one actor who, by temperament and training, was capable of doing it justice. In the hands of Mr. John T. Raymond, the careless, reckless, airy brag and boundless anticipations of the character were rounded into a harmonious whole, and the character itself was shown to be simple and strong behind all its eccentricities. And there was something in it that all Americans, in those days when the gilding was first washed from the age most of us had taken for solid gold,—there was something in it we all could recognize; in fact, there was scarce one of us who had not *Colonel Sellers* or some blood-relative of his

for a friend; there was scarce one of us who had not put money in schemes hardly more fantastic than the visionary Kentuckian's Oriental Eye-water. Indeed, this general recognition of the truth of the character was pushed so far as to point out not one, but many originals, from whom the portrait had been drawn. Mr. Raymond has told me that he rarely acts the character for a week, in any part of the country, without having at least one inhabitant of the place say to him confidentially: "I suppose you know I am the original *Sellers*. Didn't Mark ever tell you? Well, he copied me straight through. Why, all my friends knew me first time they saw you!"

BRANDER MATTHEWS, in *Scribner's Monthly*, July, July, 1879.

Ichabod Crane pervades the piece, and lights it up with his humor and good nature. He is ungainly, agile, pertinacious, fantastic, absurd and ludicrous; yet tender, delicate and lovable—a compound of awkward gallantry, Quixotic philanthropy, scarecrow drollery, shrewd sense, and homespun refinement. This part in the action requires a keen sense of comic perplexity, a touch of wistful tenderness here and there—his condition is so forlorn—and, in one scene, an emotion quite closely akin to pathos. Mr. Raymond has found in this a thoroughly congenial part, and he infused into it a sweet spirit, and treated it with a delicacy of touch that must have surprised many who knew him only in the vociferous *Sellers*. It was seen, however, that to some extent, the part is extraneous to the main action of the drama. It hovers around the current of what is done and

suffered, but is not interpenetrated with these experiences. Moreover, in the enforced transfer of his love, wrought by the coquettish *Katrina*, *Ichabod* is trifled with, and this limits the scope of the character, in serious acting. Mr. Raymond, all the same, embodied a winning identity, and made as gracious with inherent gentleness as it was droll with eccentric humor.

WILLIAM WINTER, in the New York *Tribune*, August 19, 1879.

If, however, the play was a wearisome one, the *Colonel* himself, as represented by the American actor, made amends for its shortcomings. Mr. Raymond is an eccentric comedian of very genuine power, considerable command of facial expression (without which, indeed, no man could play such parts), and untiring energy. He works hard all through the piece, and gives his hearers the impression that he really believes in the extraordinary speculations which he advocates. His humor, it must be said, is a little hard at times, but the character, as drawn by the author, admits of very little light and shade, and certainly Mr. Raymond makes the most of it. But many of his auditors the other night must have wished to see so capable a comedian in a better piece, and it is to be hoped we shall have an opportunity of doing so. The American actor was somewhat inadequately supported; but, in justice to the artists engaged, it must be said that they had uphill work to perform.

H. SAVILE CLARKE, in the *Examiner*, London, July, 1880.

Mr. Raymond carries off all this tomfoolery with his well-known dash and bounce. His proper domain is extravaganza, and he revels in airy absurdities. He belongs to the class of actors whose personality interests the public vastly more than the characters they pretend to represent. When this play has run its course he should disdain all subterfuge on the programmes, and come out plainly in his next farce as 'Raymond at the North Pole,' or 'Raymond on the Yang-tse-Kiang,' or where not. Buckstone adopted this plan for years in England, and was never so successful. Grassot and Ravel of the Palais Royal gained half their fame in pieces that carried them through extraordinary adventures under their own names. *Sellers* was indisputably a bit of character; but it is no depreciation of Mr. Raymond to say that he will not again find a part of that sort until American writers of true humor are enlisted into the service of the stage, and are content to spend long years of apprenticeship in learning its practice. In the writing of 'Fresh the American' there is no humor at all. It furnishes the principal actor with a good supply of Wall Street slang, and trusts to his admirable fooling to bring it safely through. This he does. In pursuit of his wife, the *Egyptian Princess* aforesaid, who has been taken from him and restored to the harem of her father, *Achmet Pacha*, he unfolds the rich assortment of qualities which are supposed to characterize the American stockbroker. He matches pennies with *Lucrezia Borgia*, and, having won her, sells her as a slave to *Achmet Pacha*. He chaffs the chief eunuch, kisses the odalisques, and hails his father-in-law familiarly as 'Ach.' He climbs rope-

ladders with the agility of a Venetian lover, and travels in a box as comfortably as the inventor of the Flying Trunk in Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale. It is of very little consequence that the piece is badly written and worse than badly constructed. Its central idea is good and its central figure is better. What more can the most exacting spectator demand? In New York the play may run till the spring, and a year from now it may still be continuing its triumphant progress round the country.

The *Critic*, New York, February 12, 1881.

In default of American comedy, a symmetrically rounded whole adequately interpreted in all its parts, lovers of the drama must needs content themselves with the capable presentation of individual characters. *Col. Sellers* owed much of his success to the personal qualifications of Mr. Raymond for the part; to his expansiveness, to his sanguine imagination, to his boundless views, the actor gave due expression and emphasis. In spite of a few points of superficial resemblance Mr. Raymond succeeds in keeping the insurance agent [in 'Risks'] altogether distinct from his predecessor, the visionary Southerner, and even in showing the radical difference between the two. The part of the insurance agent is cheaply written, and is largely made up of odds and ends from *Paul Pry* and *Mark Meddle* and their kin. The actor combines these heterogeneous elements into a harmonious whole, and conceals by his art their random origin. In 'Risks' Mr. Raymond shows himself more of an artist than when he was first seen here in the 'Gilded Age': his execution is surer and stronger; he gives full

effect to the volubility, the assurance, the impossible impudence of the part, while he reveals beneath these characteristics the true character of the man, his sincere good feeling, capable of self-sacrifice, if need be, and accomplishing it with the same unconscious humor with which he has just before seized an unsuspecting victim to insist on the advantages of life insurance.

BRANDER MATTHEWS, in the *Library Table*, February 2, 1878.

'For Congress' certainly fulfills its chief object in providing Mr. Raymond with a character which fits him like a glove. This is *General Josiah Limber*, an Illinois carpet-bagger, well versed in all the minor arts of corruption, with a plentiful lack of modesty and an abundance of lung power. This personage packs conventions, disburses campaign funds, runs elections, unmasks everybody's villany except his own, and lightens the labors of statesmanship by paying court to two women at once, thus involving himself in complications of a particularly embarrassing nature. Mr. Raymond is a very funny man, and he plays this part with unflagging spirits. While he is upon the stage—and he is fortunately seldom off it—the merriment is constantly maintained, and his performance is not only amusing, but possesses the additional merit of great technical skill. His by-play in the third act, where he is endeavoring to secure a written offer of marriage which has fallen into the hands of the wrong woman, may be mentioned as a very neat and effective bit of low comedy. His mannerisms of course are as marked as ever, but he does some genuine acting nevertheless, and his *Limber* is likely to become more popular than

any thing he has done since his first great success in *Colonel Sellers.*

J. RANKEN TOWSE, in the *Evening Post*, New York, Jan. 11, 1884.

I think that one of the most amusing incidents during our stay in Paris was that in which occurred the performance of *Dundreary.* You are, perhaps, aware that at the subsidy theatres in France, no fire, not even a lighted match, is permitted on the stage. You will also recall the fact that in one part of the play, *Asa Trenchard* has to burn a will. In order to comply with the law and at the same time get rid of this document, I was compelled to tear the will instead of applying the match in the usual way. The result was that the part was not at all a success, much of its point being lost by the tameness of the incident. At last I said to Sothern, 'I have a great mind to burn the thing anyhow and take the chances.' My misfortune was in confiding my intention to Sothern, for he instantly gave instruction to one of the *gendarmes* who was hovering about the wings, to arrest me in the act. When the scene came on, anticipating no trouble, but expecting on the contrary to receive a recall, as I always did at this juncture, I struck the match and lighted the paper. Before I knew anything else I was seized from behind by a big *gendarme* and carried bodily off the stage. Of course the audience did not know what was to pay, and I was equally in the dark. Not speaking French I could not make any explanation, and the more I struggled the tighter the *gendarme* held me in his grip. It was only when Mr. Sefton, the agent of Mr. Sothern, made his appearance and

explained matters that I was released. You should have then seen how those two French soldiers went for Sothern, mad as hornets at being imposed upon, and the manner in which he disappeared down the back stairs into a convenient hiding-place. Fortunately Sefton was enabled to appease the indignation of the irate Frenchmen, and in a few minutes *Dundreary* was permitted to come out of his retirement, and the play went on happily without the discomfiture of the audience.

JOHN T. RAYMOND, in 'Birds of a Feather,' *pp.* 216-17.

Fond of a practical joke, Mr. Raymond is as often the victim as the perpetrator of this kind of wit. For his farewell benefit at the Park Theatre, he invited a number of his comrades from the Lotos Club to appear as *Jurors*, promising them that their names should be suppressed. It is hardly necessary to say that the full list was promptly furnished to the papers, and that the lotos-eaters found themselves unexpectedly famous. But they had their revenge. The entire point of the final scene of the play depends upon the verdict of "Not Guilty," promptly rendered by the jury, to whom *Colonel Sellers* has appealed. But the keen sense of humor of Juror Hiltman saw an opening for fun through his blue goggles, and Foreman Shaw answered "Guilty" to the demand of the Court. There was a pause—a dead silence, and then a roar of laughter from the audience, who took in the situation. For a moment Raymond lost his grip and ejaculated, "Oh, 'Shaw! They don't mean it—they mean just the other way." "Guilty!"

repeated Foreman Shaw, grimly; and the action of the play stopped as completely as grandfather's clock. But by this time Raymond had recovered his self-possession. He saw from the laughing eyes that glittered under the disguises of the clubites that it would be of no use to poll that jury. "I move, your Honor, that the jury be allowed to retire for consultation!" he shouted; and then in a passionate whisper, appealed to the boys to "let up, for Heaven's sake." The appeal was too real to be resisted, the surrender of the practical joker too humble to be refused, and the foreman gravely stated that he desired to change the verdict to "Not Guilty." Then came the hurrahs of the supernumeraries, the delight of *Colonel Sellers*, the vindication of the heroine—and the curtain.

The *Musical Times*, New York, October 11, 1879.

MISS ELLEN TERRY.

A wind of spring that whirls the feigned snows
  Of blossom-petals in the face, and flees :
  Elusive, made of mirthful mockeries,
Yet tender with the prescience of the rose ;
A strain desired, that through the memory goes,
  Too subtle-slender for the voice to seize ;
  A flame dissembled, only lit to tease,
Whose touch were half a kiss, if one but knows.

She shows by *Leonato's* dove-like daughter
  A falcon, by a prince to be possessed,
    Gay graced with bells that ever chiming are ;
In azure of the bright Sicilian water.
  A billow that has rapt into its breast
    The swayed reflection of a dancing star!

HELEN GRAY CONE.



MISS ELLEN TERRY
As Henrietta Maria in "Charles I."

DRAFT

MISS ELLEN TERRY.

The admirers of Miss Ellen Terry—and those who observe her acting with sympathy and insight can hardly fail to admire this gifted and charming woman—have been disposed to apply to her a quotation from 'Much Ado About Nothing' : "A star danced—and under that I was born." The application of this bit of fancy is not, in the circumstances, unpleasantly extravagant. It is quite probable that Miss Terry was born under a dancing star. Stars appear to dance occasionally in certain latitudes, and Miss Terry was not born in the tropics, where star-light is quiescent. Her temperament is chiefly that of restless sparkle. When it does not sparkle, it is singularly sweet and plaintive. And the brightest buoyant stars seem often sweet and plaintive.

Miss Terry occupies a somewhat peculiar place upon the stage. She is the leading actress in the leading theatre of England. She is the honored and equal associate of the most distinguished and distinctive actor in England. Her triumphs have been won in a perfectly simple and natural manner, without special effort or commercial enterprise. There has been no attempt made by her to attain success at the expense of good method and good theatrical morals. She has not pushed herself into a superficial and

glaring prominence. When one stops to contrast her unobtrusive, substantial career, with the career of several actresses, her contemporaries, who have conquered brilliant achievements, the impression left upon the mind by this contrast is altogether in her favor.

There are, it may be said without the least fear of contradiction, many accomplished actresses upon the stage whom one regards with esteem and sincere favor, without feeling the need of discussing their qualities of talent, temperament, and character, too seriously. They are the actresses who are praised as a matter of course. Not because they happen to be great—since greatness involves perpetual argument and criticism—but because they are entirely respectable, evenly intelligent, and never by any chance shocking or surprising. Miss Terry is not one of these actresses. She does some things very well and other things very poorly. She is an artistic and æsthetic see-saw. She is uneven, erratic. It is impossible to count upon her. But there is always the possibility that her acting will reveal the impulses of an original mind, the emotions of a spontaneous and sympathetic nature, the mild and free beauty of a copious, affluent talent.

Miss Terry has not been subjected at any time to methodical training in the art of acting. Yet she has enjoyed exceptional experience, practical schooling in the provincial theatres of Great Britain, and the counsel of older and wiser heads. She belongs, moreover, to a family that has added distinction and authority to the stage. It was her good fortune to join Mr. Irving's company at the turning-point of her career. This was more than good for her: it was a kind of fortunate destiny. It is pretended that certain men

are undoubtedly created for certain women. Why, then, should not certain actors be created for certain actresses. Mr. Irving and Miss Terry fit each other so perfectly, so phenomenally, in acting, that it is difficult to think of him without thinking of her. And I may add that, without Mr. Irving's potent and beneficent influence, Miss Terry would be a less appreciated actress than she is. The conditions and influences of the Lyceum Theatre are as skilfully adjusted to her talent as to Mr. Irving's. The atmosphere of the place stimulates her, its brilliant traditions surround and absorb her. She is a commanding, beautiful, luminous figure in the popular temple.

Miss Terry's peculiar talent was discovered long before she was invited by Mr. Irving to succeed Miss Bateman at the Lyceum Theatre; or, rather—for I desire to be quite just to Mr. Irving's acute perception of merit—this actor was one of the first persons that discovered it, nearly twenty years ago. In 1867 Miss Terry and Mr. Irving acted together, at London, in 'Katherine and Petruchio.' Miss Terry was then only nineteen years old. Mr. Irving was deeply impressed by her performance and it is even said that, at this early period of his artistic life, he promised himself the pleasure of choosing Miss Terry as his leading actress when he should become the manager of a theatre. Mr. Irving fulfilled his promise, but he was in a fair way of being disappointed by Miss Terry herself. In 1867 Miss Kate Terry, after a long and honorable career, retired permanently from the stage. Miss Ellen Terry was disposed to follow her elder sister's example, in spite of the fact that she had been greeted with enthusiasm and acclaimed as an actress of

extraordinary gifts by critical observers and by the public. Nevertheless, Miss Terry did retire temporarily in 1868. Her reappearance, six years later, at the Queen's Theatre, was unexpected and all the more delightful for that reason. One of the most competent of the English critics wrote at the time: "The reappearance of this young actress was welcomed with a cordiality fairly expressive of the value attached to those pleasant remembrances; and the position vacated by Mrs. John Wood, through the claims of other engagements, could not have been more satisfactorily filled."

The record of Miss Terry's career may be briefly summarized. She was born at Coventry, Feb. 27, 1847, (Mr. Pascoe, in his 'Dramatic List,' gives the date as 1848, but that appears to be incorrect.) When she was hardly more than an infant, she was exhibited in a pantomime, at Hull; but her first appearance was effected, practically, as the child *Mamilius* in the 'Winter's Tale,' produced by Charles Kean towards the end of his remarkable period of management at the Princess's Theatre. In 1858, she was seen as *Arthur* in Mr. Kean's second revival of 'King John.' These two performances revealed Miss Terry as an actress of marked precocity. After Mr. Kean gave up the Princess's Theatre, Miss Terry drifted out of public sight and was soon forgotten. Meanwhile, she was preparing herself for serious undertakings. It is believed that she acted at Bath and Bristol, serving an arduous apprenticeship in those places. In March, 1863, she reappeared in London, at the Haymarket Theatre; her part was *Gertrude*, in the 'Little Treasure' (an adaptation of 'La Joie de la Maison'). *Ger-*

trude is an impulsive, gentle, lovable little creature, audacious in her innocence and unhampered by conventional training. Miss Terry achieved noteworthy success in this character, and was accepted at once as an actress of high spirit and enchanting simplicity. Her next performance was that of *Hero* in 'Much Ado About Nothing.' She acted also *Mary Meredith* in 'Our American Cousin,' and other secondary parts. There was another period of retirement between 1863 and 1867; during the latter year, she appeared at the New Queen's Theatre, in Charles Reade's adaptation from the French, the 'Double Marriage,' a stagnant play which has been produced in New York by Miss Kate Claxton. Miss Terry performed subsequently the familiar character of *Mrs. Mildmay* in 'Still Waters Run Deep," and *Katherine* to the *Petruchio* of Mr. Irving.

At her third re-entrance in London, during 1874, Miss Terry gave a spirited and clever performance of *Philippa Chester*, in a revival of Charles Reade's ingenious drama, the 'Wandering Heir.' Later on she played *Susan Merton* in 'It's Never too Late to Mend.' At the Prince of Wales's Theatre, in 1875, she appeared for the first time as *Portia*, in the 'Merchant of Venice.' Mr. Coghlan was the *Shylock*. As *Portia* is considered to-day one of Miss Terry's most fascinating and eloquent impersonations, the reader may be curious to know how it was regarded at the outset. One commentator wrote of it: "The bold innocence, the lively wit and quick intelligence, the grace and elegance of manner, and all the youth and freshness of this exquisite creation, can rarely have been depicted in such harmonious propor-

tion." During the same year Miss Terry appeared as *Clara Douglas* in 'Money,' and was found exceedingly impressive in this character. She was placed above Mrs. Bancroft for natural expression, and was compared to Desclée. It was not a long step from *Clara Douglas* to *Pauline* in the 'Lady of Lyons,' and Miss Terry took the step easily. She was admired subsequently, at the Prince of Wales's Theatre as *Mabel Vane* in 'Masks and Faces,' and as *Blanche Haye* in Robertson's 'Ours.' In 1876, she joined the company at the Court Theatre, a small house at the south-west end of London. There she acted in a revival of 'New Men and Old Acres,' and as *Olivia* in Mr. W. G. Wills's pathetic play, arranged from the 'Vicar of Wakefield.'

Miss Terry's performance of *Olivia* defined accurately her place upon the stage. It was the crown of many triumphs, and it won for her the affection, the adulation of a public which is not disposed to accept new faces and new methods lightly. Miss Terry's extraordinary success in Mr. Wills's play led to her engagement, by Mr. Irving, for the Lyceum Theatre, and on the evening of Dec. 30, 1878, Miss Terry was welcomed for the first time on that stage. Miss Isabel Bateman had acted *Ophelia* to Mr. Irving's *Hamlet*. Miss Terry took her place and surpassed her. The event was momentous for the stage, as it was momentous for Mr. Irving and Miss Terry. Nothing could have been more perfect in its way than the *Ophelia* of Miss Terry—a distinctly intellectual and poetic conception, interpreted and illuminated by action radiant in its grace and loveliness and softened with irrisistible pathos.

The record of Miss Terry's performances at the

Lyceum Theatre has been almost unbroken by failure. As *Ophelia*, *Beatrice*, *Letitia Hardy*, *Portia*, *Ruth* in 'Eugene Aram,' *Jeannette* in the 'Lyons Mail," *Henrietta Maria* in 'Charles I.'—in all these characters and in many others, she has sustained her reputation as an actress of large accomplishment, delicate sensibility, and independent mind.

Miss Terry was introduced to the American public in New York, at the Star Theatre, on the evening of Oct. 31, 1883. This was the second night of Mr. Irving's first engagement there. On the preceding night, Mr. Irving had made an auspicious opening as *Mathias* in the 'Bells.' Miss Terry has no part in this strange and thrilling play—thrilling, it must be admitted, chiefly because Mr. Irving dominates it with his quaint, picturesque, and vivid personality. The 'Bells' was followed by 'Charles I.,' a drama of persuasive and tender interest, and an unjustifiable contortion of history. In 'Charles I.' Miss Terry gave an impersonation of *Queen Henrietta*, and interpreted this capricious, impetuous, devoted wife with spontaneous aptitude and unaffected dignity. Afterward she became successively *Portia* in the 'Merchant of Venice,' *Jeannette* in the 'Lyons Mail,' *Letitia Hardy* in the 'Belle's Stratagem,' *Beatrice* in 'Much Ado About Nothing,' *Viola* in 'Twelfth Night,' and *Ophelia* in 'Hamlet.' Mr. Irving and Miss Terry made their second tour through the United States during the season of 1884–85. Since then they have not acted in America, although they visited New York in the summer of 1886.

It does not seem to be necessary, in an impartial

consideration of Miss Terry's acting, to speak of this as something better than it is in order that one may praise it effectively. The tendency to describe Miss Terry in hyperbole has been rather marked, whereas it ought not to be a difficult task to describe her in accurate and, at the same time, sympathetic language. Some judicious observer will undoubtedly attempt this task in the future, and he will find the business full of cheerful inspiration. It is impossible to think of Miss Terry without piquant pleasure and a certain indefinable good humor. The highest acting is tragic, and she is not tragic. The highest actresses are women of broad intellectual power and fervid passion—the *Medeas* and *Lady Macbeths* of the stage: Miss Terry does not belong to their rank and fails to suggest even vaguely the scope and splendor of their genius. But, on the other hand, one may say of Miss Terry that she remains in the memory, as some ravishing dream of youth, beauty, and sweetness remains there; at moments she has a frolicsome and bewitching spirit, the spirit of *Beatrice;* and at other moments her eyes are languid with grief and pity, and her face is pallid with the plaintive hopelessness of *Ophelia.* The exquisite images of womanhood that are recalled, when one recalls the acting of Miss Terry, after a brief lapse of years, are almost invariably distinct and picturesque. That is because Miss Terry reveals, in each of her performances, the life, the spiritual nature, of a woman, rather than the mechanism of a character. There is more soul than art in her acting. Occasionally, there appears to be too little art, the absence of it resulting in restless and aimless action, superfluity of gesture, and monotony of speech.

But these are slight faults in the sum of rich and noble acting. The limits of Miss Terry's power are indicated by her *Beatrice* and *Ophelia.* These characters are the extremes of feminine individuality. *Beatrice* is audacious, quick in wit and invention, self-contained, bold, and brilliant; *Ophelia* is fragile, tender, unimpassioned, feeble in brain and impulse, a pitiful and pathetic figure. The *Beatrice* of Miss Terry has all the dash, all the fascination and fearlessness, all the elasticity, of scornful youth; and her *Ophelia* is gentle, winsome, and heartbreaking. Miss Terry is entirely original, and her originality lies both in feeling and manner. She sees things as others might not see them, and she does things as others would not do them. With her bright, fresh mind, her fluent vitality, her strong personality, her striking presence, her soft and musical voice, and her expressive, picturesque, uncommon face—she is, perhaps, one of the few actresses who could hold a lofty place successfully in association with Mr. Irving.

GEORGE EDGAR MONTGOMERY.

My recollection of Miss Ellen Terry dates from her impersonation of the little *Duke of York.* She was a child of six, or thereabout, slim and dainty of form, with profuse flaxen curls, and delicately-featured face curiously bright and arch of expression; and she won, as I remember, her first applause when, in clear resonant tones she delivered the lines:

> Uncle, my brother mocks both you and me;
> Because that I am little, like an ape,
> He thinks that you should bear me on your shoulders.

Richard's representative meantime scowling wickedly and tugging at his gloves desperately, pursuant to paternal example and stage tradition. A year or two later and the baby-actress was representing now *Mamilius* and now *Puck*, her precocious talent obtaining, I observe, the favorable mention of Mr. Charles Kean's biographer, who comments, too, upon "the restless elfish animation and evident enjoyment of her own mischievous pranks" she displayed as the merry goblin, *Robin Goodfellow*. Upon the second revival of 'King John,' in 1858, Miss Ellen Terry succeeded to the part of *Prince Arthur*, which her sister was now deemed to have outgrown.

The public applauded these Terry sisters, not simply because of their prettiness and cleverness, their graces of aspect, the careful training they evidenced, and the pains they took to discharge the histrionic duties entrusted to them, but because of the leaven of genius discernible in all their performances —they were born actresses. Children educated to appear becomingly upon the scene have always been obtainable, and upon easy terms; but here were little players who could not merely repeat accurately the words they had learned by rote, but could impart sentiment to their speeches, could identify themselves with the characters they played, could personate and portray, could weep themselves that they might surely make others weep, could sway the emotions of crowded audiences. They possessed in full that power of abandonment to scenic excitement which is rare even among the most consummate of mature performers. They were carried away by the force of their own acting; there were tears not only in their

voices, but in their eyes; their mobile faces were quick to reflect the significance of the drama's events; they could listen, their looks the while annotating, as it were, the discourse they heard; singular animation and alertness distinguished all their movements, attitudes, and gestures. There was special pathos in the involuntary trembling of their baby fingers, and the unconscious wringing of their tiny hands; their voices were particularly endowed with musically thrilling qualities. I have never seen audiences so agitated and distressed, even to the point of anguish, as were the patrons of the Princess's Theatre on those bygone nights when little *Prince Arthur*, personated by either of the Terry sisters, clung to *Hubert's* knees as the heated irons cooled in his hands, pleading passionately for sight, touchingly eloquent of voice and action: a childish simplicity attendant ever upon all the frenzy, the terror, the vehemence, and the despair of the speeches and the situation.

DUTTON COOK, in the *Theatre*, June, 1880.

I have yet to allude to Mr. Irving's masterstroke as a manager—the creation of a *tragedienne* in Miss Ellen Terry. The British public has accepted her with acclamation in that character, thus justifying Mr. Irving's choice, which is all I am here concerned with. To those who, in tragic parts, demand more than graceful attitudes and a sing-song recitation, it must seem a pity that this most charming of all our actresses of comedy should have been translated into a sphere in which she is so far from at home. Even at the Lyceum she has not been without chances of showing her true gifts. How exquisite is her *Letitia*

Hardy, her *Iolanthe* (in Mr. Wills's play), her *Ruth* in 'Eugene Aram,' even her *Desdemona!* As for her *Ophelia*, her *Pauline*, her *Juliet*, even her *Portia* and her *Beatrice*, '*non ragioniam di lor*.' The public and the critics are pleased with them, and to give the reasons for my dissent would lead me far from my subject, which is not Miss Terry, but is Mr. Irving. Suffice it to note his penetration in discerning in Miss Terry the almost necessary complement to his own talent. Whatever her absolute merits in a part, she always harmonizes as perhaps she alone could with the whole tone of the picture. She gives their crowning charm to the fabrics of South Kensington. She has all the outward and visible signs of the inward and spiritual grace which covers a multitude of histrionic sins—I mean, of course, intensity.

WILLIAM ARCHER: 'Henry Irving, Actor and Manager,' *pp.* 100–1.

The most surprising and absorbing performance of the night was that of Miss Ellen Terry, who came forward as *Queen Henrietta Maria*, making her first appearance in America. She was welcomed with enthusiasm and was called before the curtain again and again as the night wore on. Her dazzling beauty as the Queen, and her strange personal fascination—in which a voice of copious and touching sweetness is conspicuous, would partly explain this result. But, "there's more in't than fair visage." The Queen has to exhibit impetuosity and caprice. She has to express conjugal tenderness and to illustrate a woman's fidelity to the man whom she loves, when that man is in trouble and danger. She has to ask a

boon from a tyrant, and turn upon him in scorn and noble pride when repulsed. The situations are all conventional, and even hackneyed. What shall be said of the personality that can make them fresh and new? Miss Terry is spontaneous, unconventional and positively individual, and will use all characters in the drama as vehicles for the expression of her own. This, in *Queen Henrietta Maria*, was a very great excellence. Miss Terry's acting has less mind in it than that of Mr. Irving, though not deficient here, but it proceeds essentially from the nervous system—from the soul. There were indications that her special vein is high comedy; but she was all the woman in the desolate farewell scene that ends the piece, and she melted every heart with her distress, even as she had charmed every eye with her uncommon loveliness.

WILLIAM WINTER: 'Henry Irving,' *pp.* 23–4.

The striking excellences of Ellen Terry's *Portia* are, if any thing, bettered by being transferred to a larger stage than that on which they were first presented to a London audience. Every changing phase of the part is rendered with the highest instinct and art, and every change seems natural and easy. The tenderness; the love so fine that it finds no check to open acknowledgment; the wit, the dignity; and in the last scene the desire to be merciful and to inspire mercy, giving way to a just and overwhelming wrath, and followed again by the natural playfulness of the lady who is not the less a great lady because she indulges it, are alike rendered with a skill that one must call perfect. As feats of acting the assumption of *Nerissa* of a bragging youth's manner, and the exit

in the trial scene are specially remarkable; but it is needless to point out in detail the patent beauties of a performance with which we can find no fault.

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK, in the *Saturday Review*, Nov. 8, 1879.

The most fortunate moments of her acting come so near to the magic of nature, the charm that she exerts at such times seems to be so completely the outcome of sudden inspiration, that there is a danger of altogether ignoring the presence of an artistic faculty which is exercised with so much subtlety and finesse. This unrivalled simplicity in touching the finer chords of feeling is associated with a personality that enters naturally into the abstract creations of poetical drama. She can cast aside without effort all those little points of dress and manner and bearing by which we are wont to identify the social life and habits of our time, and she can pass with equal ease and assurance into the freer and larger air of the world of fancy and imagination. The inherent limitation of her art lies on the side of passion; the stronger moods of feeling that spring out of a complex character deeply touched by suffering and experience, lie clearly beyond the range of her power; but, on the other hand, there is no actress of our time who can express with equal force or refinement the tenderness of a simple nature, the pathos that belong to suffering that is past, or the playful gaiety of a sensitive temperament where laughter may quickly change to tears. The grief of *Ophelia*, half remembered and half forgotten in her madness, and with every painful suggestion subdued to the service of ideal grace and beauty, gave Miss

Terry an admirable opportunity for the display of her powers. The delicate realism of the impersonation enforced but did not injure the imaginative completeness of the original: it left intact all that is ideal and fanciful in the finer structure of a poet's work. Side by side with the ineffaceable recollection of such a performance as this was may be set the remembrance of Miss Terry's *Olivia*, a creation of faultless taste and charm, so simple in its method, and so convincing in its reality, that even the most accomplished of those who played with her seemed to expose themselves to the reproach of artifice and convention. We may recall also the heart-broken utterances of *Desdemona* confiding to *Iago* the loss of her husband's love; and with any of these souvenirs of the past we may compare without danger of disappointment the gaiety and raillery of *Beatrice*, falling like a veil at the sudden stroke of wrong to one she loved, and exposing the depth and tenderness of a true woman's heart.

J. COMYNS CARR, in the *Fortnightly Review*, February, 1883.

The *Portia* of Miss Ellen Terry was the best seen here for many years. The actress caught the exact spirit of the part, and played it in the most brilliant manner. It is tolerably evident now that her strength lies almost entirely in the direction of comedy. In the trial scene she read the famous "mercy" speech with exquisite emphasis and feeling, and her assumption of manhood was conceived in the truest vein of comedy. It may almost be said that she presented the actual *Portin* whom Shakspere drew—a most winning figure of elegant womanhood, full of spirit, ten-

derness, and grace. Her success with the audience was immediate, and her reputation in England was no longer a matter for wonderment. Her delightful performance of this character will largely increase the curiosity to see her as *Beatrice.*

J. RANKEN TOWSE, in the *New York Evening Post*, Nov. 7, 1883.

And of all the parts which Miss Terry has acted in her brilliant career, there is none in which her infinite powers of pathos, and her imaginative and creative faculty are more shown than in her *Ophelia.* Miss Terry is one of those rare artists who need for their dramatic effects no elaborate dialogue, and for whom the simplest words are sufficient. "I loved you not," says *Hamlet*, and all that *Ophelia* answers is, "I was the more deceived." These are not very grand words to read, but as Miss Terry gave them in acting they seemed to be the highest possible expression of *Ophelia's* character. Beautiful too was the quick remorse she conveyed by her face and gesture the moment she had lied to *Hamlet* and told him her father was at home. This I thought a masterpiece of good acting, and her mad scene was wonderful beyond all description. The secrets of Melpomene are known to Miss Terry as well as the secrets of Thalia.

OSCAR WILDE, in the *Dramatic Review*, May 9, 1885.

MR. J. L. TOOLE.

By England's fireside altar-stone,
His name is prized, his virtue known;
To England's heart his fame is dear;
To him she gives her smile, her tear;
She loves him for his rosy mirth
She loves him for his manly worth:
She knows him bright as morning dew;
She knows him faithful, tender, true.

WILLIAM WINTER.

MR. J. L. TOOLE.

John Lawrence Toole, a son of the well-known Toastmaster to the Corporation of London, was born in 1832. He began his business career as clerk in a wine-merchant's counting-house, and while there displayed in amateur theatricals a talent which gained for him the serious encouragement of very competent judges, and which has since won him a place in the first rank of English comedians. His first appearance on the public stage was made at Ipswich ; but it was at the Queen's Theatre, Dublin, in 1852, that he practically began his thence uninterrupted professional career. On July 22 of the same year he appeared for the first time on the London stage at the Haymarket as *Simmons* in the 'Spitalfields Weaver.' After further provincial experience, he appeared at the St. James's Theatre, London, on Oct. 2, 1854, as *Pepys*, the diarist, in Messrs. Reade and Taylor's 'King's Rival.' In September, 1856, he appeared as *Fanfarronade* in 'Belphegor' at the Lyceum, and also as *Autolycus* in a burlesque of William Brough's. In 1859 he joined Mr. Webster's company at the Adelphi, where he was the original *Spriggins* in T. H. Williams's 'Ici on Parle Français.' In 1860 he played at Drury Lane, and in 1862 he appeared at the Adelphi as *Caleb Plummer*, in Mr. Boucicault's version of the 'Cricket on the Hearth.' This is one of the

parts in which Mr. Toole has shown a quality rare and invaluable in an actor much devoted to low comedy, eccentric comedy, and burlesque—that of a true and unforced pathos naturally and artfully commingled with the grotesque points of a character. The performance is remarkable both in broadness and in fineness of touch, and, without going into detailed criticism, an idea of it may be conveyed to those who have not seen it by saying that it is Dickens's Caleb Plummer come alive upon the stage. Another success of a not dissimilar kind was made by the actor at the Adelphi as *Stephen Digges*, in a play founded by Oxenford on the 'Père Goriot'; and at the same theatre, in 1865, Mr. Toole again showed a capacity for playing on the most varied emotions in a part now better known than *Stephen Digges*, Mr. Walter Gordon's 'Through Fire and Water,' in which he played the principal character, *Joe Bright*. In 1868, at the Queen's Theatre, Long Acre, Mr. Toole made a great success as *Michael Garner*, a part written to exhibit his powers in comic, passionate and pathetic passages, in H. J. Byron's 'Dearer Than Life.' At the same theatre he played admirably a purely comic part in Messrs. Palgrave Simpson's and Herman Merivale's 'Time and the Hour,' a play in which the late Mr. Alfred Wigan had a part less well suited than some others to his exceptionally fine, quiet and incisive style. The conjunction of the two actors was remarkable, in that each in his way represented a school which has been done away with by the changed condition of theatrical affairs, by long runs, by engagements for the run of a piece, by the dearth of stock companies, by the comparatively slight training

and study now thought needful to equip an actor, and by the growing habit of considering that a given player is to stick immovably to a given line of business. Mr. Alfred Wigan was at this time manager of the Queen's Theatre. It was, I believe, due to Mrs. Alfred Wigan, who helped her husband by her keen discernment and business capacity, as well as by her genius—for it was no less—and art in acting, that Mr. Toole was asked to join the company then playing at the Queen's. Mr. Toole has always been in the true, not the merely technical, sense of the word a character actor, and so, within limits less narrowly defined than is generally supposed, was Mr. Alfred Wigan. Both always thought out a part as a whole, and not in respect of its effective snippets.

Among Mr. Alfred Wigan's characteristics were the extraordinary semblance of meaning, repose, and spontaneity that he could give to dialogue often worthless and jerky in itself, and in certain parts—one may mention such widely differing ones as *Achille Dufard* in the 'First Night' and *John Mildmay* in 'Still Waters Run Deep'—he has remained as unapproachable as in parts of another kind Mr. Toole still is. In one sense no two styles could be more unlike than those of Mr. Alfred Wigan and Mr. Toole; but they had this important thing in common, that both were formed by a method of learning and experience now too seldom seen by its fruits. In H. J. Byron's 'Uncle Dick's Darling,' at the Queen's, in 1869, Mr. Toole repeated the same kind of success he had won in *Michael Garner*. It was at the same theatre, by the by, that he was of a pair as noteworthy in its way as the one already referred to when he appeared as the *Artful Dodger* and Mr. Henry

Irving as *Bill Sikes* in a version of 'Oliver Twist'—in which, also, Mr. Clayton gave a singular reality and impressiveness to the part of *Monks* which might have been thought impossible. Mr. Irving's performance was full of power and activity; and the type was studied both from Dickens and from the life. Mr. Toole's *Dodger* was not very like anything except Mr. Toole in an odd dress, but it was very funny. From the Queen's Mr. Toole went to the provinces on tour, and re-appeared in London at the Gaiety in 1871. Here he played many parts with unvarying success, among them *Paul Pry* in Poole's play, a part to which he gives the old-fashioned exaggeration of farce without overstepping the artistic limit. In 1874 he played in Mr. Albery's 'Wig and Gown,' at the Globe. In 1875 he sailed for America; and in 1879 he re-appeared at the Folly Theatre, London (which he managed himself, and which he still manages under the changed name of Toole's Theatre), as *Chawles*, in H. J. Byron's 'A Fool and his Money.' Since then his career has been as familiar as it has been deservedly popular. Mr. Burnand's 'Artful Cards' and Mr. Hollingshead's 'Birthplace of Podgers' have been among his most successful reproductions; he has produced some inimitable burlesques by Mr. Burnand, and has given to the stage a very funny play, 'Going It,' by the veteran Mr. Maddison Morton and a younger collaborator. He has given an imitation of Mr. Sims Reeves (in Mr. Burnand's 'Faust and Loose') absolutely astonishing in its personal and vocal likeness; and in other burlesques from the same hand he has given imitations less close and less artistic, but very amusing, of Mr. Wilson Barrett. Mr. Coghlan, and M. Marais, of 'Théodora'

fame. He has made the town laugh with the song of the 'Speaker's Eye' in 'Mr. Guffin's Elopement,' and he has introduced and kept on his stage some excellent actors, of whom, among those still with him at the date of writing, one may mention especially Miss Emily Thorne, Mr. E. D. Ward, of 'Théodora' fame, Miss Eliza Johnston, and Mr. Shelton. He has not perhaps given in enough to a changed taste in the matter of *décors* for drawing-room plays; but his *mise-en-scéne* is always excellent in the end, if sometimes insufficiently rehearsed before a first night, and in the matter of trick scenes for burlesques he has done wonders with the small space at his disposal. Trick scenes suggest what is loosely called jugglery, because mechanical contrivance is frequently, though in strict wrongness, associated with that word, and in slight-of-hand Mr. Toole has considerable skill which he has several times utilized in burlesque parts.

As an actor, Mr. Toole, at his best, has no rival, in his own way; and his range, as has been shown, is very far from being limited. When he chooses to personate a part which falls within this range, one recognizes in him both art and genius. When, in the ordinary use of the word, he acts a part, without making a consistent impersonation of it from first to last, one admires a very unusual, natural aptitude, backed by a thorough knowledge of the stage and its ways; and when it pleases him to be simply Mr. Toole in this or that make-up or dress, bent on amusing, who can help being amused? He gags freely, but only in his lighter efforts, and never without effect. His position on the stage is unique, and admirably well earned.

WALTER HERRIES POLLOCK.

Towards the close of an autumnal day in 1838, Mr. E. L. Blanchard, happening to pass through Shorne, a village about four miles from Gravesend, came upon the oddest group imaginable. "A little boy, scarcely six years of age, was the centre," we are told, "of an admiring throng of urchins, who seemed to be in the most exuberant state of delight at each fresh comicality of the entertainment, which seemed to consist of an imitation of a farm-yard, with a few voices dexterously thrown in. It was over before I could discover the reason for the merry peals of childish laughter which had reached me; but in a few moments the extremely juvenile monologist recommenced his performance without becoming aware of another being added to the audience. A dexterous re-arrangement of his pinafore, a twist of his child's cap, and a small stick snatched from the hedge, and there was the miniature figure of an old man tottering rather than toddling about the garden; the few words uttered in simulated tones serving to identify a resemblance which evidently left the diminutive spectators in no doubt as to the fidelity of the likeness. Then came a change of face, another readjustment of the pinafore, and an altered tone, with a word and a whistle given by turns. This was quickly accepted as a faithful portraiture of a comic countryman well-known to the highly appreciative little assembly, and tiny hands were clasped gleefully as the voice of the rustic, simulated in childish treble, was heard to proclaim the necessity of giving something to an old gray mare. In answer to my inquiry as to the name of the amusingly precocious young gentleman, a giggling damsel, scarcely ten, lisped out, 'It's only a little London boy

down for his health, sir.'" That little London boy was John Lawrence Toole. Mr. Toole's natural talents as a humorous and pathetic actor have been developed as much by study of books and of men as by practical experience. He is to the stage what Hogarth was in painting, and Dickens in the literature of fiction. He draws his inspiration from the life of persons about him, mentally taking notes of anything that may aid him in the delineation of special types of character. He often approaches and sometimes oversteps the verge of caricature, but is in no sense a caricaturist. "There is a geniality about his performances," Lord Rosebery once said, "which spreads an electric chain about his audiences, and makes them forget the actor in the friend. He possesses the magic and irresistible power of creative sympathy. No young man of my age has spent more money in stalls than I have to see him." In all the relations of private life, it should be added, Mr. Toole has never incurred reproach, and no member of his profession has given away more in public and private charity than he. "I may say," wrote the manager of an asylum for the insane in an annual report, "that the considerate kindness which compelled Mr. Toole to step aside from his pressing engagements, and *request the privilege* of again entertaining our people and pouring oil into their mental wounds, entitles him to a place in our hearts as the 'good Samaritan' of the stage."

The *Theatre*, London, Oct. 1, 1879.

That Mr. J. L. Toole, as *Joe Bright*, would represent to perfection the honest plebeian, good at heart, and thick of head, might easily be foreseen; but there

is novelty in the drunken outburst that brings the first act to its close. Droll inebriety is common enough upon the stage, and Mr. B. Webster in 'Janet Pride' gives an admirable picture of the habitual drunkenness by which a man endeavors to silence the voice of an evil conscience. But the effect of ardent spirits rapidly imbibed by a man who is already distressed in mind, and who is suddenly converted from a comparatively rational being into an ungovernable savage, ready to commit any deed of violence, has been seldom, if ever, represented, and Mr. Toole has never more forcibly displayed his faculty for profitable observation than in his terrific exhibition of this peculiar phase of human frailty.

The *Times*, London, July 3, 1868.

There is no gift of the actor of low comedy which Mr. Toole does not possess in a high degree. His individuality is as comic as that of the best of his predecessors; his vitality is as unflagging as theirs; his method as irregular and as effective. Like them, he is exuberant, untiring, irrepressible; an actor off the stage as much as upon it; drawing from a species of imagination rules fitted only for guidance upon an occasion, and wholly unsuited for codification in any manual of art; holding of a part, as lawyers maintain of a case, that each carries its own law. Like them, too, he has won a purely personal affection and regard that extends far beyond the range of those to whom he is known, and embraces most lovers of laughter and innocent enjoyment.

It is, however, as a broadly comic actor his chief reputation has been made, and it is in connection with

low comedy his name will descend to future generations. Mr. Toole is unequalled in the expression of comic bewilderment. Unlike some of the best remembered of his predecessors who assumed, in face of difficulty, a stolidity against which fate itself seemed powerless, he contrives to add to his comic perplexities by his own apparent quickness of invention. He is always ready with an explanation which is invariably wrong, and thus, like Chaos in 'Paradise Lost,' he

> By decision more embroils the fray.

His vulgarity upon the stage is like his perplexity in the total absence of stupidity. In *Chawles* he presents a footman who has inherited wealth and made a bid for position. No type of vulgarity can be more familiar than this. In watching, however, the difficulties and entanglements brought upon the would-be aristocrat by his ignorance of the manners and modes of speech of those with and among whom he seeks to live, we are more impressed by the ingenuity of the interpretation he fixes upon what is unfamiliar, than tickled by its absurdity. A certain element of manliness, so to speak, enters into his farce. *Paul Pry* even, the most contemptible of busybodies, and the most incurable of sneaks, is not in his hands wholly despicable. If nobody else believes in him, he believes in himself, and he acts up to his own code, such as it is. In *Chawles*, in *Spriggins*, and in the *Spitalfields Weaver*, the manliness forms a distinct feature. A conscience is preserved through the wildest extravagances, and in the exposition of a preposterous vanity, and in the pursuit of an unsanctified gain, he still retains a measure of our respect.

Mr. Toole's position as an actor of low comedy and as a humorist is now secure. He is not free from the faults of his craft; and the means he adopts to force a laugh are not always artistic. There is, however, behind these things, a rich, ripe, overflowing nature, which is sure to tell in the end, and the memory of extravagance in method is blotted out as soon as the "touch of nature" is felt. Geniality, joyousness, emotion, are Mr. Toole's own in an enviable degree. His heart is in his work, and he is badly fitted indeed with a part if the note of sympathy is not struck in the audience.

JOSEPH KNIGHT, in the *Theatre*, January, 1880.

When I was playing in Byron's drama, 'Uncle Dick's Darling,' at the Gaiety Theatre, my dear old friend, J. L. Toole, was the bright, particular star of that entertainment, and Adelaide Neilson was the Darling. Now my friend Toole, among many brilliant qualities, has a notable faculty for business, and in the invention of captivating posters and insinuating hand-bills he had at that time no equal. Pray don't think that he cares for such arts now, for he long ago discovered their vanity when after playing for a week in a certain place, he met the local bill printer—to whom he had paid a lot of money—and who greeted him with "Hello Mr. Toole! how long have you been here?" Still, before this awakening, his activity in advertising was extreme. One of his rivals—an eminent tragedian—was once much moved, when leaving a town, to find his posters covered with the announcement, "Toole is coming!" and the climax of torment was reached when, going to bed that night, he found

this stimulating legend pinned on his pillow. Well, my indefatigable friend was not content with playing superbly in 'Uncle Dick's Darling.' He busied himself with all manner of devices to popularize the performance. He never went anywhere without a bundle of labels in his pocket, and, if he happened to be in church, or a police court, or any other place of fashionable resort, he was sure to leave behind him a touching memento, sticking in some prominent place, to the effect that J. L. Toole was to be seen at the Gaiety Theatre in 'Uncle Dick's Darling' every evening. And I have lately been credibly informed that one of these labels pleasantly adorns the tombs of the Pharaohs.

About this time died William Brough, one of the well-known brothers who did so much good work for the stage and periodical literature. No doubt you have read the genial recollections of them in Edmund Yates's 'Reminiscences.' To poor William Brough's funeral, in a cemetery a little way out of London, Toole and I repaired one cold and drizzly afternoon—just the kind of day when the gloomy reminder that we are all mortal becomes most oppressive. We saw our dear, dead friend laid in the earth and as we turned away, wondering whose scene with the gravedigger would come next, the prosaic suggestion was made that perhaps some degree of physical comfort might be got out of a little hot brandy and water. This idea was embraced with alacrity, and while we were thus consoling ourselves in a neighboring inn, our attention was attracted by a crowd surrounding an object lying in the gutter. My friend's fertile brain was awake at once, so we quickly made our way

to the spot, and found that some too-thirsty soul, tempted by a barrel of spirits which had burst in the street, had drunk not wisely, but too well.

The crowd stood gazing at the body in a helpless way, but my companion knew his cue at once. Pushing his way through the throng—followed by me, his admiring assistant—and suggesting that he was a doctor, he knelt beside the fallen reveller, whose shirt-collar he unbuttoned, felt his pulse, laid a hand on his heart, and performed with impressive accuracy the whole professional routine. The people watched the process with sympathy and confidence, and, when my friend said, "It's not very serious; I can soon put him right again," there was a hum of approval and admiration. Feeling in one of his pockets, the "doctor" took out something, which he applied to the patient's forehead. From another pocket he produced something else, and applied to one cheek, while a third pocket yielded a further medicament for the other cheek. Then, looking round with a thoughtful and abstracted air, one hand covering the face of the patient, with the other he removed a cap from the head of a gaping and bewildered boy, and dexterously placed it on the beplastered visage of the prostrate Briton. "Now," said he, triumphantly, "leave him alone for five minutes, and Richard's himself again!" We then withdrew and with some celerity jumped into a cab, followed by a suppressed cheer. But we had not proceeded far when a yell of execration broke upon our ears, for the impatient crowd had found that the object of their commiseration was no less a person than "'Uncle Dick's Darling,' Gaiety Theatre every evening!"

HENRY IRVING, in the 'Clover Leaves.'

One night, after 12 o'clock, Toole and Sothern took possession of the porter's room at Humman's Hotel and sent the porter to the top of the house to find Billy Florence, who was supposed to be a guest there. Meanwhile the pair undertook to attend personally to the wants of the strangers who were stopping at the hotel, and came to the wicket to demand admittance. It must be understood that the wicket was only large enough to expose a single face. The first to present himself was a clergyman, who was very gravely informed by Toole that his "attentions to the chambermaid had been discovered, and that he would find his trunk in the morning at Covent Garden Market opposite; that this was a respectable house and he didn't wish any thing more to do with such a man." While the clergyman in his indignation was absent in Bow Street to hunt up a police officer and make his troubles known, the proprietor of the hotel appeared and was promptly notified by Sothern, who now appeared at the wicket, that they had "already missed enough spoons during his visit and that his valise would be thrown down to him in a few minutes, from the top story, and if he wished to avoid Newgate he had better reform his practices or try them upon some other hotel." This joke would have had rather a serious termination if the proprietor had not entered by a side door and discovered Toole and Sothern at their pranks, from the rear; but as soon as he found out who they were, he was so overjoyed at the presence of two such worthies in his house and the oddity of the jokes they had played that he ordered one of the best of hot suppers, sent for Billy Florence, and kept things going on in a lively way until morning.

STEPHEN FISKE, in 'Birds of a Feather,' *pp.* 132–4.

Johnny, as he is affectionately denominated by high and low, has a hand-shake, an appropriate jest, or a "shove in the mouth" for prince or costermonger. And so, in a popular pursuit of thirty years, he has won a welcome in the palace as warm as he gets in the slums. Won? Yes, and he has achieved this end by indefatigable labor inside and outside the theatre, and by the never-tiring aid of the good genius in the shape of a lanky, slab-sided elder brother, known as "the long Toole."

Yes! "The long one and the short," some thirty years ago, began their theatrical prospecting for gold at a small amateur theatre in North London, where various sums were paid to a knowing old bird manager by the aspirants for the privilege of disporting themselves, under his tutelage, for the diversion of their acquaintance. The plays were generally ambitious and blood-curdling, and the characters distributed more in accordance with the funds of the parties than their histrionic capacities. The *Duke of Gloster* was always worth "one pound ten"; *Buckingham* went for five shillings, and such parts as *Catesby* or *Ratcliffe* might have been had as low as eighteen pence. From such dramatic incubators many of our best actors have issued, and the "elder Toole," discovering that all the talent of the family lay in "the younger," wisely abandoned the boards personally and set himself thenceforth the task of booming Brother John into reputation. . . . . .

During a second season at the Lyceum, Toole was fortunate enough to catch a terrible cold. It caused him much anxiety, as he had speedily to assume a new character in another extravaganza by Brough. At the

last rehearsal, his voice was so raucous and rugged that, in despair, he anticipated inevitable failure. The part of *Birbanto*, in 'Conrad and Medora,' was supposed to be a satire on the ruffians of transpontine drama, and it so fell out, through the wily "Long One," that the critics, one and all, supposed the hoarse, croaking voice an assumption, and one of them (Albert Smith) pronounced it a "real stroke of genius." So that his attack of catarrh lifted him to the top of prosperity.

When Wright died, Toole was engaged to fill his place at the Adelphi, and then he had the luck to meet a clever tailor who cut his clothes to fit him to a nicety. H. J. Byron was the histrionic Poole and while he lived Toole always had a dramatic outfit which *suited* him to perfection.

'Uncle Dick's Darling' and similar plays, with which Adelaide Neilson, Irving, Lionel Brough, and other eminent artists were associated, were the successful pieces which successively added to his reputation and his bank account, until now he owns his own theatre, playing there every season, yet never forgetful of his first country friends, but duly and every year paying them a flying visit. I must not forget a pretty incident that occurred at the Adelphi. It was in a version of the 'Christmas Carol,' and on the table was a supper—a veritable supper—with a genuine roast goose. It was remarked that the little girl who acted *Tiny Tim* possessed powers of demolition out of all proportion to her avoirdupois, and she was curiously observed. With a dexterity equal to Kellar's, she was seen to transfer a leg, a wing, and other tidbits to the pockets of her pants; but when she confessed they

were secreted for a half-starved and bedridden little sister, deep sympathy went along with the goose and stuffing. When Toole told Dickens the story—"Bless her," he said, "she deserved the whole bird!"

GEORGE FAWCETT ROWE, in the *New York World*, March 7, 1886.

MR. LESTER WALLACK.

The "Mr. Lester" of the long ago
Is prince of light comedians even now.
Albeit years will do what they are bid,
"Time writes no wrinkle"—that may not be hid.
And so there still survive the handsome face,
The voice of music and the step of grace,
The play of wit; the gesture eloquent,
The charm of blended mirth and sentiment;
The speech refined, the easy elegance,
The fine resource, the swift intelligence,—
All these remain, as salient as of old,
And long in stage tradition will be told.
Though *Percy Ardent* now is lost to sight,
And *Harry Dornton* is forgotten quite,
Those youthful heroes live and breathe to-day
In *Captain Absolute* and *Elliott Gray*.
Never can lag superfluous on the stage
This famous son of honored lineage.
Long be the day when Time his debt shall claim,
And Lester Wallack leave to lasting fame.

WILLIAM L. KEESE.



LESTER WALLACK
As the Prince of Wales in "Henry IV."



MR. LESTER WALLACK.

It is seldom that an actor can look back to such a dramatic lineage as that of John Lester Wallack. On the maternal side he would naturally inherit the sensitive, sprightly temperament, the romantic fancy, the tender heart and the personal elegance and dash that are characteristic of the Celtic nature at its best. In the grandson of "Irish Johnston" these qualities would be expected; and those who know Mr. Wallack, whether as actor or man, are aware that he possesses them. On the paternal side his inheritance was even richer in the attributes that constitute a sturdy and brilliant character, a commanding mind, and a noble person. His father was, assuredly, a great actor, in both comedy and tragedy, but especially in comedy. His paternal grandfather, William Wallack, was distinguished on the stage, both as a singer and a comedian (his impersonation of the English sailor was famous, and the popular nautical song entitled, "Bound 'Prentice to a Waterman" was written expressly for him to sing); while his paternal grandmother, Elizabeth Field, was so good an actress that she had played in association with Garrick. John Lester Wallack, eldest child of James William Wallack, the celebrated founder of Wallack's Theatre, was born in New York, on Jan. 1, 1820, but in his infancy was taken to the home of his parents,

in London—for the elder Wallack had not yet settled in America—and there he was reared, and there he passed his youth and received his education. The profession chosen for him was the army; but, after fitting himself for entrance on a military career, and after receiving a commission, he became discouraged in viewing the crowded state of the service, and at length yielded to the earnest request of his mother that he would relinquish this pursuit. He had been about to join the army in India; but instead of this he crossed over to Dublin and went upon the stage. His early ambition as an actor was to emulate Tyrone Power and enact Irish gentlemen in comedy and also in the rattling Irish farces which then were popular. His first regular professional appearance was made at Dublin, as *Don Pedro* in 'Much Ado About Nothing,' and in that city he remained for two seasons. He was about twenty-four years old when he first appeared, and he was accounted one of the handsomest young fellows of the day. From Dublin he drifted to Edinburgh, and at length, on Nov. 26, 1846, he came out in London. His appearance was made at the Haymarket, under Benjamin Webster's management. There he was seen by an American manager's agent, who had come over to London to engage actors for the Broadway Theatre, New York, and by him he was engaged and brought back to America in 1847.

It was in the old Broadway Theatre, and on the opening night of its first season, that Mr. Wallack made his first appearance in America. That theatre stood in Broadway, on the East Side, between Pearl Street and Anthony Street, the latter being now called Worth Street. The proprietor was Alvah Mann.

The acting manager was George H. Barrett. This house was opened on Sept. 27, 1847, with the 'School for Scandal' and 'Used Up.' [It had a career of ten years and a half, closing on April 2, 1858, with Shakspere's 'Antony and Cleopatra,' in which the two great parts were acted by Edward Eddy and Mme. Ponisi.] In the first company were Henry Wallack (Lester's uncle, the father of James W. Wallack, jr.), George Barrett, Rose Telbin, Fanny Wallack, Mrs. Winstanley, Mrs. Watts, Mr. Vache, Mr. H. Lynne and Mr. J. M. Dawson, together with others of excellence and worthy distinction. W. R. Blake joined it later, and was the stage manager. It was a remarkable company. Mr. Wallack then, and for a long time afterward, acted under the name of "Mr. Lester." The first character that he represented here was *Sir Charles Coldstream* in 'Used Up.' The second was the *Viscount de Ligny* in the 'Captain of the Watch.' They never have had a better representative. Mr. Wallack is pre-eminent, beyond rivalry, in precisely the field of polished elegance of manner, cool repose of temperament, and easy and incessant brilliancy of style denoted in these parts.

The career of Lester Wallack on the American stage has (1886) extended over a period of thirty-nine years. When he made his first appearance in New York he was in his twenty-eighth year. Prior to the establishment of "Wallack's Theatre," he acted in the Broadway Theatre, the Bowery Theatre, Burton's Theatre, Niblo's Garden and Brougham's Lyceum. His first appearance in the old Bowery Theatre, with which house his name is associated in the memory of many old residents of New York,

was made as *Don Cæsar de Bazan*, on Sept. 17, 1849; and there he participated, with great success, in various melodramas. His first performance of *D'Artagnan* was given at the Bowery, in a play that he himself had made, upon the basis of Dumas' romance. In 1850 he joined Burton's Theatre, which then had taken the lead in New York theatrical life—with a company that included Burton, Blake, George Jordan, Humphrey Bland, Tom Johnston, Mrs. Russell (now Mrs. Hoey), Mrs. Skerrett, Mrs. Hughes, Miss Hill (afterwards Mrs. W. E. Burton), Julia Daly, and Lizzie Weston (afterwards the wife of A. H. Davenport, and now the widow of Charles Mathews). Burton's Theatre in Chambers Street—a famous place—had been "Palmo's Opera House." Burton opened it, under the name of "Burton's Theatre," on July 10, 1848. Lester was, during that season, at the Broadway, where he appeared Nov. 6, 1848. In 1849 he acted at the Bowery. On Sept. 2, 1850, he played in Burton's Theatre, and on May 3, 1851, he was at Niblo's, under Burton's management, that actor having come up from Chambers Street with his famous company, and augmented it; so that now it consisted of Burton, Henry Placide, W. R. Blake, John Lester, John Sefton, Humphrey Bland, J. D. Grace, Holman, Skerrett, Moore, J. Dunn, Mrs. J. W. Wallack, Mrs. Hughes, Mrs. Skerrett, Mrs. Sefton, Mrs. Holman and Miss Hill (who was soon announced as Burton's wife). In the summer of 1851 Lester visited Europe, but he returned in the fall, and on Oct. 20 re-appeared at Burton's Theatre, acting *Citizen Sangfroid*.

When the elder Wallack had founded Wallack's

Theatre, Lester, of course, associated his fortunes, finally and for life, with that house. Wallack's Theatre, at Broome Street and Broadway, was opened with Morton's comedy of the 'Way to Get Married.' Lester played *Tangent*, and he was stage manager of the new theatre. The company included, besides his father and himself, Blake, John Brougham, Charles Walcot, Charles Kemble Mason, Charles Hale, F. Chippendale, Malvina Pray (now Mrs. W. J. Florence), Miss J. Gould, Mrs. Stephens, Mrs. C. Hale, Mrs. Brougham, Mrs. Cramer, and, at first, Laura Keene, who, unfortunately for herself, soon seceded. The Broadway and Broome Street Wallack's lasted from Sept. 8, 1852, till Sept. 25, 1861, when Wallack's was opened (with Tom Taylor's play of the 'New President,' in which Lester acted *De la Rampe*), at the northeast corner of Broadway and Thirteenth Street. On Christmas Day, 1864, the elder Wallack died, and Lester Wallack inherited the theatre. Years passed away, and—borne along upon the tide which has been so steadily advancing northward in Manhattan Island —Wallack's Theatre was opened on Jan. 4, 1882, where it now stands, at the northeast corner of Broadway and Thirtieth Street. At each of these places Mr. Wallack's brilliant powers have been exerted, not less to the public delight than to noble illustration of the actor's art. Down to 1861 he maintained in the play-bills the style of "Mr. Lester"; but when the theatre was opened at Thirteenth Street he was announced for the first time as Lester Wallack.

Mr. Wallack is the author of several plays, each of which, when first presented, met with unequivocal success, and three of which have several times been pros-

perously revived. The following is a list of his dramatic productions:

1. The 'Three Guardsmen.' Produced at the Bowery Theatre, Nov. 12, 1849.
2. The 'Four Musketeers.' Produced at the Bowery Theatre, Dec. 24, 1849.
3. The 'Fortune of War.' Produced at Brougham's Lyceum, May 14, 1851.
4. 'Two to One; or, The King's Visit.' Produced at Wallack's Theatre, Dec. 6, 1854.
5. 'First Impressions.' Produced at Wallack's Theatre, Sep. 17, 1856.
6. The 'Veteran.' Produced at Wallack's Theatre, Jan. 17, 1859.
7. 'Central Park.' Produced at Wallack's Theatre, 1861. Revived, Nov., 1862.
8. 'Rosedale.' Produced at Wallack's Theatre, Sept. 30, 1863.

The 'Guardsmen' and the 'Musketeers' are melodramas, based on the well-known romances of Alexandre Dumas. A story by James Grant, entitled 'Frank Hilton, or the Queen's Own,' furnished the basis of the 'Veteran' (in which old *Delmar* was the last part ever studied by the elder Wallack). 'Rosedale' was suggested by Captain Hamley's novel, in *Blackwood's Magazine*, of 'Lady Lee's Widowhood.'

Something of the same skill that makes this comedian's art so clear, crisp, and glittering—so sharp in outline, so delicate in spirit, and so emphatic in effect—is needful to the writer who would do even approximate justice to his brilliant delineations. Ordinary descriptive phrases are inadequate to convey a just impression of the quality that makes his

acting pre-eminently the best of its kind. What Mr. Wallack preserves in comedy is that indescribable beauty which—as sometimes in the odor of a flower, or in the glint of the autumn sunshine on the fading woods, or the sad murmur of waves on a summer beach—touches the heart and charms the mind with a sense of pleasure neither to be analyzed nor explained. Many causes contribute to this effect. His precision, his mastery of light and shade, his fine use of inflection, his rippling humor, his undertone of earnest sentiment, his grace of manner, his polished method of dealing with situations and with language—all combine to give his portraitures the certainty of life. But, over that reality, an interior grace casts a glamour of refinement that—for no assignable reason —makes the mind content, serene, and happy in a sense of absolute and finished grace. Within this peculiar realm of light comedy and dealing with the evanescent, the fanciful, the romantic, the vivacious—things symbolized in a butterfly's wing or the scent of a spring breeze—Mr. Wallack is an absolute master.

WILLIAM WINTER.

My first memory of New York life, from a theatrical point of view, dates back to the year 1848. The late George Barrett, an American manager, was sent over to London by a Colonel Mann to engage artists for what was to be known as the "New Broadway Theatre," then in course of construction on the corner of Broadway and Anthony Street, I think—but never mind the locality. It is now occupied by stores. I was one of the number of actors who were secured,

and opened here as *Sir Charles Coldstream* in 'Used Up,' subsequently playing all the light comedy parts and occasionally supporting Mr. Forrest, Mr. Anderson and other famous stars of the day. For reasons of my own at that time I assumed the name of "Mr. John Lester." During our second season—I think it was our second season—William Rufus Blake was the manager, and the pecuniary results were not altogether profitable. One morning he came to me with the play adapted from Dumas' novel, now known as 'Monte Cristo,' written, I believe, by a Mr. Andrews, and said, "Here, John, this is a new departure, but you must undertake it. The success of the theatre depends on the success of this piece." I argued, but he insisted and won. The play ran for more than a hundred nights, became the town talk, saved the theatre, helped my reputation wonderfully, and for the time being was, to use a vulgarism, "the rage." After this, receiving a tempting offer from Mr. Hamblin, of the Bowery Theatre, whose aim it then was to attract the fashionable people to that portion of the city, I made an engagement with him. Besides myself, the company embraced my cousin, James Wallack, Jr., his wife, our present John Gilbert, and others who have since become more or less prominent in the profession. There I again happened to be lucky, and made a hit with my adaptation of the 'Three Guardsmen,' following it at the request of Mr. Hamblin with the sequel, the 'Four Musketeers.' The major part of the season was absorbed by the performance of these plays, and the purpose of the management was in a great measure subserved. Soon after these successes Mr. William E. Burton, who was

running the Chambers Street Theatre, which adjoined the present downtown wholesale branch of A. T. Stewart's establishment, sent for me and offered the most flattering terms for an engagement. I accepted, and there laid the foundation of the good fortune that has since waited upon me in the presentation of the old English comedies. Among the company were William Rufus Blake, Mrs. John Hoey (then Mrs. Russell), Mary Taylor, the present Mrs. Charles Mathews (then Miss Weston), Henry Placide and others.

LESTER WALLACK, reported in *New York Herald*, November 21, 1880.

Mr. Burton was very fond of Lester Wallack in those days. He admired him very much. "That young man is full of dramatic instinct, he has the talent of the family," he would say; "but he is going to be ruined by his beauty." "Why?" said his interlocutor, "do you think he is vain?" "No," said Burton, "but the women go wild about him, and he will think beauty is enough."

He lived long enough to see Mr. Wallack conquer the disadvantage of his beauty and become a first-rate artist. I remember when he put the handsome young Lester into blonde wig and made him play *Slender*. I think the way he did it gave Burton great comfort.

Mr. Lester's *Claude Melnotte* filled the town with sighs. No successes of the English actors of this last winter have been more complete. Young ladies wore the tricolor in their bonnets, hid his picture in their choicest caskets, and treasured his image in their

hearts. I remember nothing more gallant, more perfect, than this piece of acting. His attitude, as he is discovered in the morning, lying at the foot of the stairs, watching the door of his beloved, was the very embodiment of the lover's ardor. It was a devotee watching at the shrine of his patron saint; it was the man's despair, the poet's dream. Young ladies went home with new requirements in the way of devotion. Lovers had to go to Wallack's Theatre and study up. Laura Keene's *Pauline* was very justly admired; she gave the gardener's son an excuse for his dishonest folly. Lester, in his subsequent dress as the prince and the officer was pronounced "too handsome to live," but fortunately he survived it.

It seems absurd, after the subsequent successes of this favorite actor, to go back to this youthful performance, but it has left an indelible impression on my memory. It was very full of the ardor of youth. The early morning gilded it with its beams. It was love in its choicest moment; it was like the first kiss.

M. E. W. SHERWOOD, in the *New York Times*, January 20, 1875.

Then [1851] in early manhood the unrestrained alertness and vivacity of youth were his in bounteous measure. He was in the *Percy Ardent* and *Young Rapid* period, and had not yet entered the corridor of years, at the far end of which lurked the blasé figure of 'My Awful Dad.' We remember him in so many parts which in all likelihood he will never play again. There was *Rover* in 'Wild Oats'—that buskined hero with his captivating nonchalance dashed with tragic fire; his tender conversion of *Lady Amaranth*,

played, be it said, with all proper demureness by Miss Lizzie Weston; his triumph over *Ephraim Smooth*—one of Blake's instances of versatility—in a scene rich with the spirit of frolic abandon; and his humorous tilt with *Sir George Thunder*—a belligerent sea-dog, played by Burton as he alone could play it—an episode replete with comic power; all these contributed to a performance which we revelled in many and many a night, and the memory of it now as we write draws near in a succession of vivid pictures. There was *Tangent* in the 'Way to Get Married,' a capital part in Lester's hands, blending manly action and debonair grace with that easy transition to any farcical expression, a favorite and effective dramatic habit of this actor and given full play in that memorable prison scene in the comedy, when, a victim to adverse circumstances, and actually fettered, he makes felicitous use of his pocket handkerchief to hide his mortification and his chains from the eyes of the heroine during her visit of sympathy. *Percy Ardent* in the 'West End' was another of his characteristic assumptions in those days; so also were *Young Rapid* in 'A Cure for the Headache,' and the *Hon. Tom Shuffleton* in 'John Bull,' and indeed Burton's frequent revivals of the old comedies would have been a difficult matter without Lester, for in every one of them a light comedy part is distinctly drawn, and unquestionably the rarest among all dramatic artists is the first-class light comedian. . . . .

The versatility of Lester, so conspicuous throughout his career, was early made apparent. We remember him as *Steerforth*, as *Sir Andrew Aguecheek* and *Captain Murphy Maguire;* and though in the last he

acted under the shadow of Brougham's rich impersonation, still he was a delightful *Captain.* We saw him as the young lover in 'Paul Pry'; as *Frederick* in the 'Poor Gentleman,' and many more; besides those parts, such as *Young Marlow*, *Charles Surface* and *Captain Absolute*, which need no reference, since they remain ripe and finished conceptions in his present repertory. But of all his delineations of the past, that which we linger on with the greatest pleasure, and which affected us most, was his *Harry Dornton* in the 'Road to Ruin.' From the moment he appears beneath his father's window, importunate for admittance, he awakens an interest and sympathy that follow him to the end. The part abounds in touches of Lesterian hue and flavor.

Wm. L. Keese: 'Life of Burton,' *pp.* 67–9, 71–2.

It has frequently been remarked that one of the chief charms of Lester Wallack's acting is the exceedingly cool manner which he is able to assume. Those who know him in private life need not be told that it costs him no effort to assume that which is inborn. As an evidence of his natural coolness the following is of interest:

A year or two ago, while he was playing in the drama of 'Home,' and just after appearing in the disguise of *Colonel White*, and being ordered from the house by his father, who does not know him, and even while he was engaged in repeating the lines of his part expressing disgust at this treatment, a number of persons in the audience shouted excitedly:

"Look behind you! Look behind you!"

Mr. Wallack turned quietly and noticed that on the

stage mantel-piece the candle had burned down almost to the socket, and had ignited the paper which was wrapped around it. This was in a blaze, and a curtain, which hung above it, was on the point of taking fire. The danger was imminent, but the actor was equal to the occasion. Without the least show of excitement, he drew the candlestick away from the curtain, and held it while the burning wax fell fast upon his unprotected hand, and all the time continued to repeat the lines of his part, thus reassuring the alarmed audience. When the danger was past, to loud applause, he said simply, of course interlining the words:

"Well, the 'Governor' has turned me out of his house, for which I am exceedingly sorry, but I at least have the satisfaction of knowing that I have been instrumental in saving the establishment from destruction by fire."

HOWARD CARROLL: 'Twelve Famous Americans.' —*Lester Wallack.*

Now, the artist who really effected this great work for the stage was, as his father was ever happy and proud to acknowledge, Mr. Lester Wallack. If he did not lay the granite block, he wielded the silver trowel. His father's health was at the time much broken, and, though his experience and taste lent direction, and his unflagging spirit confidence and strength, *the work* was done by Mr. Lester Wallack, and it may be useful for the young and rising members of the profession to know that those honors which Mr. Lester Wallack wears now with such a graceful ease were earned by hard and unremitting

toil. The popular error, which has attracted too many idle young men to the profession, that actors earn their money easily, and that no labor attends their vocation, is one of the gayest delusions of the day, from which not a few have found unpleasant disenchantment.

Mr. Lester Wallack has often, when receiving but a small salary, after playing two parts in Southampton one night, at the close of the performance had to study a new part travelling in the stage at night, and be at rehearsal at Winchester next morning; and we have known him for a considerable portion of his career to rise at four and five in the morning and devote several hours, the only ones he could snatch, to study, for he *really* studied. Later in the day, four hours were occupied at rehearsal; and, after a hasty dinner, the hours from six to eleven were occupied in the severest mental and bodily strain. The career of D'Israeli, perhaps the most brilliant actor of our time, can furnish no more vigorous proof of long and well-sustained labor. . . . .

Mr. Lester Wallack's greatest characteristic as an artist is, perhaps, his versatility. For the art of entering into the peculiarities of a variety of characters he is without a rival. What general expression is large enough to take in such a round of characters, in each of which he is without a rival, as *Mercutio*, *Benedick*, *Orlando*, *Cassio*, *Harry Dornton*, the *Stranger*, *St. Pierre*, the *Brigand*, *Evelyn*, *Don Felix*, *Horace De Beauval*, *Claude Melnotte* (which he has played a greater number of successive nights than any actor but Macready), the *Rover*, *Wildrake*, in the 'Love Chase,' and a hundred others, in light farce

and vaudeville, which he has made peculiarly his own. Most other actors have a fixed routine, or, if the routine be not so fixed in itself, their peculiarities produce a resemblance between the characters they represent. But in a new part Mr. Wallack is a new individual; the outer and inner man are completely changed, and the transmigration of souls could not convey more forcibly the putting on of a new soul and body. He has been the original and has made the characters of *Monte Christo*, *Elliott Grey*, *Captain of the Watch*, *Badger*, in the 'Poor of New York' [*Randal*], *McGregor*, in 'Jessie Brown,' *Horace De Beauval*, in the 'Poor Young Man,' *Chalcotte*, in 'Ours,' besides a multitude of others. . . . . .

As an artist, Mr. Wallack possesses the advantage of a singularly handsome presence, which, if not absolutely essential to success, contributes certainly largely to it. Lord Byron predicted early his father's success on account of his natural style of acting, and Mr. Wallack belongs to his father's school. It is a great mistake to suppose that the *dolce far niente*, do-nothing, drawly style of acting, which is at present called 'natural acting,' is really so. It may be a copy of the modern style, but the style itself is artificial, and not natural. 'Natural acting' has been justly defined as the depicting of character and emotion by gesture and expression—the result of an impulse of the feeling controlled by the judgment, and directed into the right channel by previous study. Conventional acting is an artificial substitution of mannerism for the spontaneous prompting of momentary feeling.

The present race of actors may be divided into

two classes, such of them, at least, as deserve the name, and they are not many, who attempt any thing more than to learn the words set down for them to speak: those who study with what tone, look, and action to accompany their part, and those who study the whole play, and know what to do when they are not speaking. To these latter few Mr. Wallack belongs. Acting is an art requiring imaginative powers as well as mimetic skill; lively sympathy with the character, which Mr. Wallack has, is far more essential to a fine performance than mimicry of individual peculiarities, which Mr. Sothern possesses. Mr. Wallack really enters into the part, and some of his charming bits of business in comedy do not even seem to be tricks of trade, but things to which he is propelled by an instinctive propensity—the *innatus amor habendi* of Virgil's bees.

The Galaxy, October, 1868.

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